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The
BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

"Any country worthy of a future should be interested in its past."

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HARPER'S WEEKLY.

A JOURNAL OF CIVILIZATION.

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NEW WESTMINSTER, THE CAPITAL OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.—[SKETCHED BY F. L. POPE.]

THE COLLINS OVERLAND TELEGRAPH.

THIS immense enterprise, which is to connect America with Europe by the way of California, Behring Strait, and the Amoor River, is being pushed forward with the utmost energy during the present season, under the auspices of the Western Union Telegraph Company. The wires of the California Telegraph Company have during the past winter been extended through Oregon and Washington Territory, as far as New Westminster, the capital of British Columbia, and are now in operation to that point. At New Westminster the Collins Overland Telegraph proper commences, and will extend up Frazer River nearly to its source, and thence nearly parallel with the coast, following the general direction of the valley between the Rocky Mountains and the Coast Range to a point at or near Behring Strait, which will be crossed by a submarine cable. The line will thence extend through the eastern portion of Siberia until it meets the telegraph, now nearly completed by the Russian Government, from St. Petersburg to the mouth of the Amoor River.

The whole work is under the general supervision of Colonel CHARLES S. BULKLEY, Engineer-in-Chief, who will be remembered as the late efficient superintendent of the United States military lines in the Department of the Gulf. Colonel B. is a man of great experience in practical telegraphing, having constructed the first range of wires between Washington and New Orleans, in the year 1847.

The construction of the overland line through the colony of British Columbia is proceeding with great rapidity, considering the mountainous and difficult nature of the country. This division is under the immediate charge of Assistant-Engineer ED. CONWAY, late of the United States Military Telegraph.

A party, under command of Major F. L. POPE, of Massachusetts, is now engaged in making explorations in the country lying between the head of Frazer River and Behring Strait, in order to determine the most practicable route for the telegraph. Other exploring parties will also be set at work the present season.

TERMINAL STATION OF COLLINS'S OVERLAND TELEGRAPH, NEW WESTMINSTER, B. C.—[SKETCHED BY F. L. POPE.]

THE COLLINS OVERLAND TELEGRAPH.*

In the fall of 1943 Brigadier-General James A. O'Connor, commander of the United States North-west Service Command, and officer in charge of the building of the Alaska Highway, presented to the Provincial Archives, Victoria, and to the City of Vancouver, photostat copies of the *Papers* of Colonel Charles S. Bulkley. The same year a third copy was presented to the Library of the University of British Columbia by Mr. Isaac Burpee, of Portland, Oregon.[1]

These gifts drew attention to a valuable and unusually interesting record in the early history of British Columbia, for here, in the even, back-sloping penmanship, and the formal, almost elegant style of the 19th century, is a detailed account of one of the most ambitious schemes of that adventurous period: the attempt to bridge the distance which separates Europe, Asia, and North America by building an inter-continental telegraph line. In the long lines of communication necessary to accomplish this, the unexplored northern wilds of British Columbia were to be an important link. That this ambitious attempt ended in failure was in no way the fault of its originators. They were merely the losers in a race with time; for the final successful laying of

* For two interesting and informative accounts of the Overland Telegraph *see* James D. Reid, *The Telegraph in America and Morse Memorial*, New York, 1886, Chapter 29 (pp. 508–17), and Donald McNicol, "Pioneer Attempt to Establish Telegraph Communication Between America and Europe," *Telegraph and Telephone Age*, July 1, 1926, pp. 289–94. Some time ago Mr. McNicol assembled an outstanding collection of books, pamphlets, clippings, manuscripts, etc., relating to the history of telegraphy, and in 1941 presented it to the Library of Queen's University, Kingston, where it is known as the McNicol Collection. It includes some of the original correspondence between Collins, the Western Union Telegraph Company, and officials in Russia. This and much other material was made available to the writer through the kindness of Mr. E. C. Kyte, Librarian of Queen's University.

(1) The original manuscript is in the possession of the Library Association of Portland, Oregon. There is no title-page, and the Library of the University of British Columbia has catalogued its copy as: Charles S. Bulkley, *Papers: Comprising correspondence relative to the Collins Overland Telegraph Scheme, July, 1865–June, 1867.*

Illustration on opposite page, courtesy, The Canadian Geographical Journal.

the Atlantic cable came in July, 1866, and rendered superfluous a Russian-American overland telegraph-line.

The scheme was a logical step in the development of telegraphic communication. The first public line in England was built between London and Slough in 1843; the following year the first line in America was opened between Washington and Baltimore. In Canada the first telegraphic communication was established in 1846, between Toronto and Hamilton. By the early sixties a vast network of lines had been built in Europe and in Eastern North America; and in October, 1861, a transcontinental line was completed to San Francisco.

In the meantime the idea of submarine cables, to carry lines from continent to continent, had already been entertained. The discovery of gutta-percha as an insulating material, in 1848, gave a great impetus to this plan. The first effective cable was laid between Dover and Calais in 1851, and by 1854 there were several cables operating successfully between England, Ireland, and the Continent. In 1856 the Atlantic Telegraph Company was formed, and the following year an attempt was made to lay an Atlantic cable. This ended in failure when the cable broke and could not be recovered. In 1858 another attempt ended in momentary success. The cable was actually laid from shore to shore; but less than three months after its triumphant completion it faltered and fell silent. It was this second failure, which was widely accepted as proof that a trans-Atlantic cable would be impracticable for many years to come, that led to the development of the overland scheme as an alternative means of linking the great centres of Europe with those of the United States.

The chief originator and promoter of the overland telegraph was Perry McDonough[2] Collins, about whom strangely little is known. His name appears in none of the standard biographical dictionaries, and a careful search for information made some years ago produced only the barest outline of his early career.

(2) Collins seems to have spelled his second name "McDonough," as his name is given as "Perry McD. Collins" on the title-page of *A Voyage Down the Amoor*. This was actually incorrect, for, as noted later, he was named after two American naval officers who won distinction during the War of 1812—Thomas Macdonough and Oliver Hazard Perry.

. . . Collins was born about 1813 in a village up the Hudson, probably Hyde Park [since made famous by its associations with Franklin D. Roosevelt], and was named after the [American] naval heroes of the war of 1812, Commodores Perry and MacDonough [*sic*]. As a young man he came to New York to seek his fortune, with no particular advantages in education or family influence. He was attracted to New Orleans and for a while worked for a Mississippi steamship company, probably as a clerk. . . .

During the gold rush in 1849, Collins went to California by way of Panama and formed a partnership as a banker and dealer in gold dust with the father-in-law of U. S. Grant, the firm being known as Collins & Dent. . . .[3]

We know also that he was called to the Bar in California. But Collins was a promoter by nature, and he himself has recorded how his mind was soon busy with plans extending to distant horizons:—

For several years previous to 1855 [he wrote in 1860], while residing in California, I had given much study to the commercial resources of the Pacific side of the United States, especially in connection with the opposite coast of Asia. I had already fixed in my own mind upon the river Amoor [Amur] as the destined channel by which American commercial enterprise was to penetrate the obscure depths of Northern Asia, and open a new world to trade and civilization, when news arrived in 1855 that the Russians had taken possession of the Amoor country, and formed a settlement at the mouth of the river. Greatly interested by this event, the important consequences of which my previous speculations enabled me fully to comprehend, I proceeded to Washington in search of accurate information on the subject. . . . What I chiefly desired was to examine the whole length of the Amoor, and ascertain its fitness for steamboat navigation. That point settled in the affirmative, everything else was sure to follow as a matter of course.

At Washington, I had conferences with President Pierce, Secretary [of State] Marcy, and the Russian Ambassador, which resulted in my appointment, March 24, 1856, as Commercial Agent of the United States for the Amoor River.

Armed with this commission, and with letters to influential personages at St. Petersburg, I started without delay for the Russian Capital, resolved to traverse the empire from West to East, cross Siberia, enter Tartary, and, if possible, descend the Amoor river from its source to its mouth. . . .[4]

This adventurous journey Collins completed without mishap. He was delayed for six months in St. Petersburg and Moscow,

(3) From a sketch of Collins's life compiled about 1928 by Professor Philip B. McDonald, of the Department of English, College of Engineering, New York University. McNicol Collection.

(4) Perry McD. Collins, *A Voyage Down the Amoor*, New York, 1860, pp. 1–2.

but the time was far from being wasted. He spent his days cultivating the acquaintance of influential officials, and in gaining their good-will towards his plans to promote trade and improve communications. When he finally left Moscow on December 3, 1856, he was firmly established in their good graces.

For interesting reading, Collins's *A Voyage Down the Amoor*, published in 1860, can hold its own with many a modern travel book. In prose that may be formal, but is never tedious, he describes his winter journey, mostly by cariole, across the icy highways from Moscow to Irkutsk, and his barge voyage down the Ingoda, Shilka, and Amur rivers in the late spring and early summer of 1857. Nikolaevsk, at the mouth of the Amur, was reached on July 11, and Collins was encouraged to find that a number of American business houses had recently established branches there, and that several American vessels were in port. In August he sailed for home, and some months later arrived back in San Francisco.

It is usually said that Collins went to Russia to promote the overland telegraph project, but there is little evidence that this is so. No reference to the scheme appears in his account of his travels, and at the time he seems to have been concerned solely with ascertaining ways and means whereby American goods could be carried into Siberia. While at Chita, he corresponded with the Russian authorities regarding the possibility of building a railway from Kyakhta to Irkutsk, which would form a link between the tributaries of the Amur River on the one hand and the river systems of the Siberian interior on the other; but the telegraph nowhere appears in the story. It was undoubtedly the failure of the first attempt to lay an Atlantic cable, which was a topic of the day when he returned to the United States, and the subsequent fate of the 1858 cable, that brought the telegraph to the fore in Collins's mind. He himself had just traversed some of the most difficult country through which an overland line would have to pass; he had seen no insurmountable obstacles there, and he was convinced that the scheme was practical. If he could secure some aid from the United States Government, interest the Western Union Telegraph Company, and enlist the influence of his Russian friends, he was confident that the great scheme would not prove impossible of accomplishment.

By 1860 Collins was ready to approach the United States Government. This he did by submitting a memorial in which he outlined his plan and asked the " aid of Congress, in order to make a thorough exploration and survey of the coasts, islands, and seas of the Russian possessions, both in Asia and America," from the mouth of the Amur to the northern limits of British Columbia.[5] (Alaska, it will be remembered, was at this time still Russian territory.) The memorial was referred to the Committee on Commerce of the House of Representatives, and Congressman John Cochrane, its chairman, submitted the Committee's report on February 18, 1861. The verdict was entirely favourable. The report reviewed the obstacles of weather and geography which stood in the path of the scheme, and declared that none of them was insurmountable. As far as climate was concerned, it was " known to practical working telegraphists that high latitudes add to rather than retard the electric current." This had been proven on the lines from Berlin to St. Petersburg —all to the north of 47°, and in part as high as 60° north latitude.[6] The fact that the only submarine cable required—that across Bering Strait—was no more than 40 miles in length was turned to good account, for the report expressed the conviction that ocean cables of great length were impracticable, and pointed out that this meant that " without some new plan by which a telegraph can be constructed . . . Europe and America must remain as far asunder as if electricity had never been discovered, or Morse, Wheatstone, Amphere, and Siemens never had lived."[7] " Under all the circumstances," the report concluded, " the committee recommend an adequate appropriation by Congress, in order to carry out successfully the views of the petitioner, and for that purpose report a bill."[8]

(5) Perry McD. Collins, *Overland Explorations in Siberia, Northern Asia and the great Amoor Country; . . . with Map and Plan of an Overland Telegraph Around the World*, New York, 1864, p. 405. The appendix to this volume (pp. 391–467), which was a reissue of Collins's *A Voyage Down the Amoor*, carries the story of the negotiations regarding the telegraph scheme down to May, 1864.

(6) *Ibid.*, pp. 405–6.

(7) *Ibid.*, p. 408.

(8) *Ibid.*, p. 418.

The appropriation recommended was $50,000; but the bill fell by the wayside. Continuing his campaign, Collins returned to the attack the following year. Upon this occasion his memorial was considered by the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, and the report was presented by Senator Milton S. Latham on February 17, 1862. Once again the verdict was entirely in Collins's favour. The report noted, for one thing, that the gap that had to be closed to link Europe and the United States was steadily diminishing. When Collins had first proposed the project it had extended from St. Louis to Moscow. Since that time the Russians had determined to build a line from Moscow to the mouth of the Amur, and the telegraph was actually in operation as far as Perm, in the Urals. In the United States a transcontinental line had been completed to San Francisco in October, 1861, and its extension northward to Oregon was assured. "We hold the ball of the earth in our hand," Latham declared, "and wind upon it a network of living and thinking wire, till the whole is held together and bound with the same wishes, projects, and interests."[9]

Collins had incorporated in his memorial two letters of more than ordinary interest. One was from Samuel Morse, who stated that although the project would doubtless develop its own peculiar problems, he could see "no *insurmountable* difficulties" in its way.[10] The other was an enthusiastic endorsation from Hiram Sibley, founder and president of the Western Union Telegraph Company, which had just completed the San Francisco line. This read in part:—

> The cost of the line [to San Francisco] will not exceed one-half the lowest estimate made when the contract was awarded to me; and our men are pressing me hard to let them go on to Behring's strait next summer, and (as you say to me) "if I had the money," I would go on and complete the line and talk about it afterwards.
>
> If the Russian government will meet us at Behring's strait, and give the right of way, &c., through their territory on the Pacific, we will complete the line in two years, and probably in one.

---

(9) *Speeches of Hon. Milton S. Latham delivered in the Senate of the United States, . . . and Report from the Military Committee, on Telegraphic Communication between San Francisco and the Amoor River, . . .* Washington, 1862, p. 29.

(10) *Ibid.*, p. 30. Morse to Collins, November 29, 1861.

The work is not more difficult than that we have already accomplished over the Rocky mountains and plains to California; and, in my opinion, the whole thing is entirely practicable, and that, too, in much less time and with much less expense than is generally supposed by those most hopeful. No work costing so little money was ever accomplished by man that will be so important in its results.[11]

Upon this occasion the appropriation recommended was $100,000. Once again no money was actually voted, which is not surprising, as the Civil War was raging at the time; but many men in public life had become interested, and the Western Union Telegraph Company had definitely entered Collins's picture. Thus, in spite of internal strife, American ambition soared. Latham was not alone in feeling that the moment was less inopportune than it seemed.

Let this not be called an improper time to present this subject to Congress, because we are engaged in a war for our national existence, and because we are already taxing the whole energies and resources of the nation in a time of great peril; let us rather say that the United States is not only able to suppress rebellion at home, but able also to extend her great commercial and scientific power over the earth.

Such an enterprise as this telegraph from San Francisco to Asiatic Russia will only strengthen our power as a great commercial nation, and evidence to the world that we surrender nothing to the circumstances of the hour. . . .[12]

Collins's dream was, indeed, well on the way to being realized. Only the possibility of a successful Atlantic cable stood in its path.

The next two years were filled with complicated negotiations. Collins first of all returned to Russia, and there, on May 23, 1863, an agreement was signed that authorized construction of that part of the overland line that would pass through Siberia and Russian-America. The rights granted were for a period of 33 years.[13] On February 9, 1864, a parallel agreement was reached

(11) *Ibid.*, pp. 30–31. Sibley to Collins, October 16, 1861.

(12) *Ibid.*, p. 31. Latham, a Senator from California, was at this same time pressing vigorously for the establishment of a line of steamers from San Francisco to Shanghai; *see* his comprehensive speech on this project in *ibid.*, pp. 2–13. This line actually came into being when the Pacific Mail steamer *Colorado* sailed for the Orient on January 1, 1867.

(13) Collins, *Overland Explorations*, p. 448. After Collins had assigned his rights to the Western Union Telegraph Company, new articles of agreement, granting the privileges directly to the Company, were signed in March,

in London, covering the portion of the line which would pass through British Columbia.[14] In the meantime, Collins had formally submitted to the Western Union Telegraph Company the terms upon which he would be willing to assign to them his rights and privileges in the plan. He asked for $100,000 in paid-up stock, the right to subscribe to another $100,000 in stock, and a cash payment of $100,000 "as compensation for eight years' service in securing the grants."[15] These terms were submitted to the Board on March 16, 1864, and accepted unanimously.[16]

The Western Union, on its part, undertook to build a telegrap-line from some point "not east of Chicago" to the mouth of the Amur River.[17]

About this time Collins submitted a third and last memorial to Congress. This was referred to the Senate Committee on Commerce, which, in turn, asked for an expression of opinion from William H. Seward, Secretary of State. Two passages from Seward's reply, dealing with Collins's status, and the nature of the concessions for which he was asking, deserve quotation:—

> . . . I have, not without design, called it Mr. Collins' enterprise. It is truly his, because it was he alone who conceived and projected it, and who has clothed it with the substantial form which enables the three great States, whose concerted action he solicits, to cause it to be put in operation. But in another sense it is entitled to be regarded as an enterprise of the government of the United States. During all the time that Mr. Collins has been engaged in maturing and developing it, and presenting it to the consideration of Russia and Great Britain, he has been acting under the instruction and with the approbation of the Department of State, and a knowledge of that fact has not been withheld from Congress.

1865, by Hiram Sibley (for the Western Union) and I. Tolstoy (for the Russian Telegraph Department). *See* letter, Tolstoy to the Company, August 24, 1865, in the McNicol Collection. The friendly relations that Collins had established with the Russians shows up in the correspondence that took place at this time. In 1866, when Tolstoy was made a Count for his diligence in promoting the overland telegraph, the Company at once sent off a cordial letter of congratulation. *See* the copy in the McNicol Collection.

(14) Collins, *Overland Explorations*, p. 448.

(15) Reid, *The Telegraph in America*, p. 510–11. Collins's proposal was first formally submitted to the Western Union Company on September 28, 1863. *Ibid.*, p. 510. The actual terms were arranged later.

(16) *Ibid.*, p. 510.

(17) Collins, *Overland Explorations*, p. 447.

What Mr. Collins asks of Congress is, the grant of a right of way across the public lands, with the right to take therefrom materials necessary for constructing the line; the use of a national vessel, suitably officered and equipped, to make surveys and soundings along the north Pacific coast, beyond the limits of the United States, and to aid in prosecuting the work; and, finally, a stipulated compensation for the government use of the line, when it shall be constructed. If the views I have submitted are just, this demand for patronage is neither unnecessary nor unreasonable.[18]

This time Collins received substantially what he asked for.

A second edition of Collins's account of his Asiatic travels was published in 1864, no doubt as part of his campaign to gain support for his great project. The text proper was left unchanged, but the title-page was altered, a map was inserted, and the history of the overland scheme was dealt with in detail in a 77-page appendix. The map not only indicated the route of the proposed line, but included projected extensions to India, China, Japan, and Australia. At the time of publication the Russian trans-Siberian telegraph had been completed as far as Irkutsk, while on this continent a line had been carried northward from San Francisco to Portland, Oregon.[19]

The work of actually organizing the undertaking was the next step.

Financially, the arrangements were relatively simple. A Western Union Extension Company was formed, and its activities were financed by special "Extension Stock" issued by the Western Union Telegraph Company. The cost of the 5,000 miles of line was not expected to exceed $300 per mile, or $1,500,000 in all; and although the authorized capital was $10,000,000, consisting of 100,000 shares of $100 each, only 20,000 of these were issued at first, and only 5 per cent. had to be paid down. Western Union shareholders were given a preference, and they promptly took up practically the entire issue, which was regarded as an excellent investment.[20]

(18) Seward to Zachary Chandler, Chairman of the Senate Committee of Commerce, May 14, 1864; quoted in Collins, *Overland Explorations*, pp. 464, 466.

(19) *See* foot-note 5 *supra*.

(20) Reid, *The Telegraph in America*, p. 511. For a facsimile of an Extension Company stock certificate *see Dots and Dashes*, VII., November, 1931, p. 1.

The Extension Company's service was organized on a quasi-military basis, both to improve discipline and because it was thought the plan would give the Company's officers more prestige when dealing with foreign and native peoples. Camp guards were posted, reports were submitted, and accounts kept, more or less in army style. Many of the leaders of the various expeditions had had military training and experience; those who had not were given appropriate honorary ranks.

For the post of Engineer-in-Chief, the Company chose Colonel Charles S. Bulkley, who had been in charge of the United States Army's military telegraph system in the Department of the Gulf. The choice was an excellent one, for Bulkley was not only able and experienced, but "was universally respected and trusted; and he entered his new appointment with the unbounded confidence of all parties."[21] Under him were three field superintendents, one assigned to each of the three vast segments of territory through which the telegraph-line was to pass. Franklin L. Pope, of New York, one of the best-known telegraphic engineers of the day, who later became the partner of Thomas A. Edison, was given the rank of Major and appointed Chief-of-Explorations in British America—that is to say, in British Columbia. Robert Kennicott, a distinguished young explorer and naturalist who had added immensely to the collections of the Smithsonian Institution, was appointed to the corresponding post in Russian-America.[22] Serge Abasa, a Russian, took charge in Siberia. Another notable figure was Captain Edmund Conway, who came to British Columbia as Chief of Construction Parties. Conditions here were different than elsewhere. For some hundreds of miles the telegraph-line would parallel such well-established travel routes as the Cariboo Road. These sections Conway could start to build immediately, while Pope devoted his energies to trail-blazing through the less-known north country.

Kennicott had stipulated that he should be permitted to enlist a number of assistants, who could collect natural history speci-

(21) Reid, *The Telegraph in America*, p. 512.

(22) For an account of Kennicott's career, the diary of his remarkable expedition to the Northwest Territories and the Yukon in 1859–62, and other documents, *see* James Alton James, *The First Scientific Exploration of Russian America and the Purchase of Alaska*, Evanston and Chicago, 1942 (Northwestern University Studies in the Social Sciences, No. 4).

mens, and a full-fledged "Scientific Corps," which even boasted a flag of its own, took to the wilderness with the various exploring expeditions. The group consisted of six young scientists and a volunteer assistant. Several of the former became widely known in later years, notably J. T. Rothrock, W. H. Dall, and H. W. Elliott. Frederick Whymper, the artist, joined one of the parties when it called at Victoria, and spent two years in the interior of Alaska.[23]

Bulkley was appointed in August, 1864, and immediately set about the immense task of organizing and setting in motion the far-flung enterprise. After completing preliminary arrangements in the East, he left New York on December 13 for San Francisco, where, in January, 1865, he opened offices on Montgomery Street.[24] There he pressed forward the work of engaging a staff and devising means whereby hundreds of workmen could be mustered in the wilds. To carry men, equipment, and supplies to their appointed places a Marine Service had to be organized, and from first to last the Extension Company owned or chartered more than a score of ships. It had already been arranged that the schooner *Milton Badger* and the bark *Clara Bell* should carry wire, insulators, and other telegraphic supplies from New York to the Pacific Coast; and Bulkley purchased a number of additional vessels in the spring of 1865, including the steamer *George S. Wright* and the barks *Palmetto* and *Golden Gate*. The U.S.S. *Shubrick* was made available by the United States

(23) In 1913, at the request of the late E. O. S. Scholefield, then Provincial Librarian and Archivist, Dr. Rothrock described his experiences in a lengthy letter (dated West Chester, Penn., January 11, 1913) now filed in the Provincial Archives. "The pecuniary inducement offered the scientists," Rothrock recalled, "was board, transportation and thirteen dollars a month. It probably was a fair expression of the estimate placed upon scientific endeavor by the business end of the enterprise." W. H. Dall described his part in the overland telegraph scheme briefly in the volume entitled *Alaska and its Resources* (Boston, 1870). Henry W. Elliott became an authority on Alaska, and in 1886 published *An Arctic Province: Alaska and the Seal Islands;* only incidental reference is made therein to the overland telegraph. Frederick Whymper's interesting *Travel and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska, formerly Russian America,* London, 1868, describes his experiences in detail. The flag of the Scientific Corps is shown in Dall, p. 527.

(24) George Kennan, *Tent Life in Siberia,* New York, 1888, p. 3.

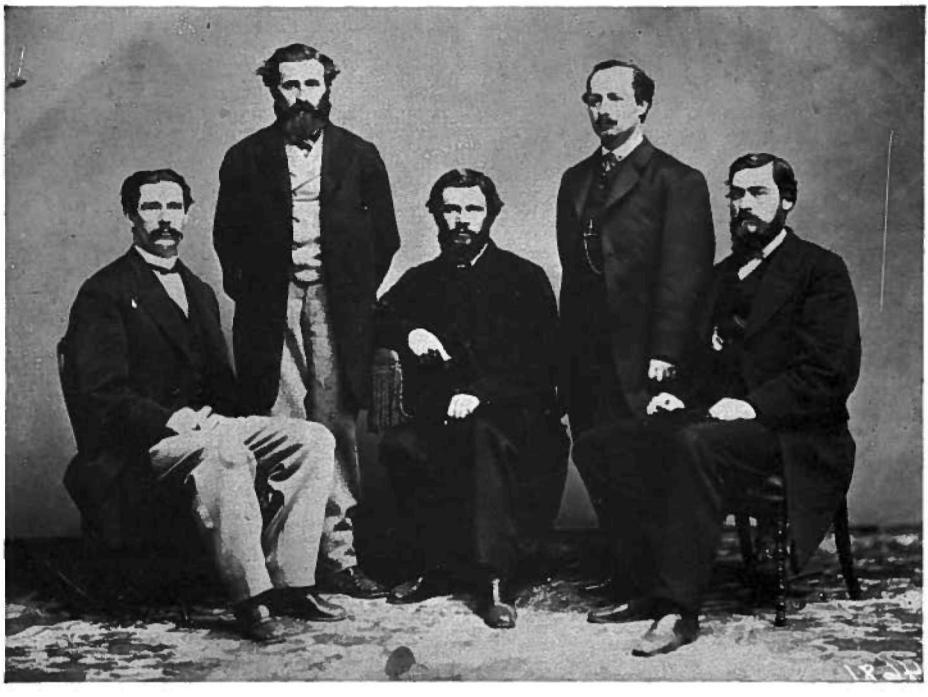
Government, while across the Pacific the steam corvette *Variag* was placed at the disposal of the Company by the Russian Government.

In spite of his utmost efforts, Bulkley found it impossible to get the various expeditions under way as promptly as he had hoped. In British Columbia, as we shall see, Conway was able to make relatively good progress, but elsewhere the preliminary arrangements lagged. The ships that had been assembled at San Francisco were not ready for service until June, and even then Bulkley still had no means of sending an advance party to Siberia. At this opportune moment the brig *Olga*, a private trader, happened along, bound for Kamchatka, and Bulkley was able to arrange a passage in her for Major Abasa, and three assistants—James A. Mahood, a civil engineer, R. J. Rush, and George Kennan, who later wrote an interesting account of the work of the Asiatic Division in a volume entitled *Tent Life in Siberia*.[25]

The *Olga* sailed from San Francisco on July 3. Nine days later Major Kennicott and a corps of assistants left for Alaska in the *George S. Wright* and *Golden Gate*. Pope and Conway had already reached their appointed field in " British America." Collins's scheme was at last fairly under way.

It is usually said that British Columbia owed her first telegraphic connection with the outside world to the Collins Overland scheme; but, strictly speaking, this is not so. Before the Extension Company was even organized, the California State Telegraph Company had completed a line from San Francisco to Portland, and was arranging to carry it farther northward. Horace W. Carpentier, President of the Company, visited British Columbia early in 1864, and on March 1 he petitioned the Legislative Council for permission to extend this line to New Westminster. The response was prompt and favourable. Within ten days the Council had passed and the Governor had approved the ordinance known as the First Telegraph Act, 1864. This

(25) First published in New York in 1870. In 1885, Kennan returned to Siberia as leader of an expedition sponsored by the *Century Magazine* to investigate the Russian penal system and penal colonies there. A series of articles published in the *Century* in 1888–90 were expanded into the two-volume work entitled *Siberia and the Exile System* (New York, 1891).



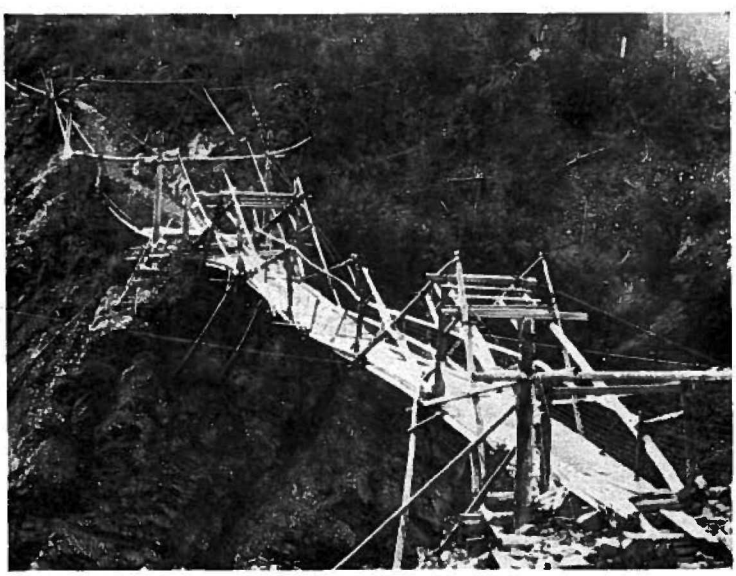
Courtesy, The Canadian Geographical Journal.

Captain Edmund Conway (centre) and a group of Overland Telegraph officials. Captain J. C. Butler, who explored the Skeena and Stikine rivers in 1866, is on the extreme left.

Courtesy, The Canadian Geographical Journal.

Buckley House, Takla Lake, in 1866.

From a pen-and-ink sketch in the Provincial Archives, based on a water-colour by Franklin L. Pope.



Courtesy, The Canadian Geographical Journal.

The famous suspension bridge built by the Indians over the Bulkley River at Hagwilget. It was bound together with telegraph-wire left in the wilderness when the Overland Telegraph scheme was abondoned.

gave the California State Telegraph Company building and operating rights within the Colony for a period of 25 years, on condition that work commenced within five months, and was completed within thirteen months, on a line that would "place . . . New Westminster in telegraphic communication with the United States and the Canadas. . . ."[26] Later, rights and Company were both alike swallowed up by the Western Union; but the fact remains that the line was assured before these developments occurred.

Edmund Conway's diaries for 1864 and 1865, which were presented to the Provincial Archives some years ago by his daughter, Miss Alice Conway, enable us to follow his movements, and the progress of the overland telegraph in British Columbia, in some detail. He first came to New Westminster in November, 1864, and spent some weeks in friendly negotiations with Governor Seymour and other officials. One result was that early in 1865 the Legislative Council passed the International Telegraph Ordinance, which gave to "Perry Macdonough Collins, his associates and assigns" the right "to survey, and . . . construct and maintain" the section of the overland line that would pass through British Columbia. Construction was to commence by January 1, 1867, and to be completed by January 1, 1870; thereafter New Westminster was to be kept "in complete and continuous telegraphic communication with the whole telegraphic systems of the United States and Russia. . . ." This accom-

(26) British Columbia, Legislative Council, *An Ordinance to encourage the construction of a Telegraph Line, connecting British Columbia with the telegraph lines of the United States, and for other purposes.* No. 9, 1864: passed by the Council, March 8; received Governor's assent, March 10. Actually the rights were given to the President of the California State Telegraph Company "and to his successors in office, or assigns." The Ordinance gave certain rights to Carpentier *exclusively*, and on the grounds that this was contrary to the policy of the British Government, the Colonial Secretary disallowed the Act. The result was *An Ordinance to amend the "First Telegraph Ordinance, 1864,"* No. 9, 1865: passed by the Council, January 30; assented to February 22. This re-enacted the original Ordinance, minus the offending clauses. Some have contended that the Colonial Office's primary objective was to delay construction of a telegraph line from the United States, as an overland telegraph line from Canada to British Columbia was under discussion at this time. *See* the two Parliamentary returns known as the "Telegraph Papers" (London, 1863 and 1864).

plished, the builders were to be confirmed in their rights for a period of 33 years.[27]

The Extension Company hoped to have the line nearly finished by the beginning of the specified construction period, let alone the end of it. In November, R. R. Haines, Assistant Superintendent of the California State Telegraph Company, had written to Governor Seymour stating that working-parties were then about 10 miles north of Seattle, and that he hoped that they would reach New Westminster by the middle of January. This hope was not fulfilled, but events nevertheless moved at a lively pace. February saw the arrival of J. L. Pitfield, who was to be the Extension Company's agent in New Westminster. He and Conway established temporary offices in the Columbia Hotel. The excitement aroused in the little city was intense, and the *British Columbian* referred editorially to the wondrous fact that New Westminster, "an infant city established only 6 years before amid towering trees that seemed to smile on man's puny efforts . . . was to be linked with the electric systems of Asia, Europe and North Africa." It was an hour of triumph, and the editor could not resist the temptation to have a thrust at the Royal City's "jealous and grasping neighbour." "We understand," he wrote, with obvious satisfaction, "it is not in contemplation to establish a branch to Victoria."[28]

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(27) *An Ordinance to encourage the construction of a line of Telegraph, connecting the Telegraphs of British Columbia with the Telegraph lines of Russia, the United States and other Countries, and for other purposes.* No. 5 of 1865: passed by the Council, January 26; assented to February 21. This Ordinance provided that all telegraph materials required for the construction or repair of the line should be admitted duty free up to January 1, 1870. It was followed in 1866 by *An Ordinance to incorporate The Western Union Telegraph Company, in lieu of the Western Union Telegraph Extension Company* (No. 3 of 1866: passed January 29; assented to January 31). At this point the Western Union Company proper took over the rights, etc., which had been granted to Collins and to the Extension Company.

(28) *British Columbian*, February 25, 1865. Victoria was finally linked to the mainland by telegraph in 1866, when cables were laid between the Saanich Peninsula and San Juan Island, between San Juan and Lopez islands, and between Lopez Island and the Washington mainland. Communication was established between New Westminster and Victoria on April 24, 1866.

Governor Seymour seems to have been much interested in the telegraph, and the first line actually placed in operation in British Columbia extended from the city proper to Government House, a distance of about a mile. This was completed, with appropriate fanfare, on March 6. On the 17th the U.S.S. *Shubrick* arrived, with Colonel Bulkley on board; but the Engineer-in-Chief hurried on to Alaska after a stay of only one day. However, the *Shubrick* brought the cable that was to be laid across the Fraser River, and Conway had already arranged to use Governor Seymour's steam yacht, the diminutive *Leviathan,* to place it in position.[29] A first attempt failed, owing to stormy weather, but on March 21, the laying was completed successfully. The Governor himself acted as steersman, and in recognition of the international character of the event, the star-spangled banner floated proudly overhead. The first message transmitted read as follows:—

Opposite New Westminster,
March 21st, 1865, 11:45 a.m.

To the Editor British Columbian.

We have to announce that the Cable is laid and working. It was laid in seven (7) minutes.

Telegraph.[30]

Another month passed before through communication was finally established with the cities to the south. Colonel Bulkley, who paid a second flying visit to New Westminster on April 11–12, missed the great event by only a few days. On April 18 the line to Seattle was at last in working order, but rejoicing was cut short when over it came the shocking news of the assassination of President Lincoln, which had occurred on the 14th.

It is interesting to note that Bulkley was not satisfied with this southern connection. On April 22 he wrote to his old chief, Colonel Anson Stager, General Superintendent of United States Military Telegraphs:—

(29) The steamship *Great Eastern* was frequently referred to as the *Leviathan,* and the editor of the *British Columbian* remarked in the issue of March 25, 1865: "It is rather an interesting coincidence that while the submarine cable will be laid across the Atlantic by the big *Leviathan* that across the Fraser is about to be laid by the little *Leviathan.*"

(30) *British Columbian,* March 23, 1865.

It will be useful should you find in the future that a line from Salt Lake city down Lewis River is necessary to connect the Overland telegraph. . . .

The California Line to New Westminster, our present connection, is badly constructed and part of it through the gigantic forest growth of Oregon and Washington; this part will ever be subject to frequent breaks.[31]

Conway was now free to push forward the Overland Telegraph proper. He had already spied out the land as far as Hope, and now set off on another expedition that carried him as far as Lytton. On May 25, Franklin L. Pope, Chief-of-Explorations in British Columbia, arrived in New Westminster with a group of assistants and workmen, and on the 31st he and his party left for the Interior. On June 17 the schooner *Milton Badger* completed her long voyage from New York, and Conway at last had the wire, insulators, and other materials essential for actual construction.

Thereafter exploration, the location of routes, the clearing of the right-of-way, the erection of poles, and the stringing of wires all proceeded apace. From New Westminster the line was to follow the south bank of the Fraser River as far as Hope, and wire was being strung from pole to pole within 48 hours of the arrival of the *Milton Badger*.[32] On June 27 the river steamer *Lillooet* laid the Overland Telegraph's own cable across the Fraser,[33] and thereafter at times it was possible to maintain contact with some of the working parties. Building operations were soon in full swing both above and below Yale. On the upper reaches of the line Conway opened an office at " Cornwall's ranch," a few miles from the Ashcroft of to-day, on August 2, and another at Clinton two days later. Lower down, the line was completed and commenced working to Hope on August 17.[34] According to the *British Columbian* the first dispatch transmitted read as follows:—

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(31) From the copy of the letter in the McNicol Collection.

(32) This and many of the other dates and details cited are taken from Captain Conway's manuscript *Diaries*, in the Provincial Archives.

(33) *British Columbian*, June 29, 1865. The report states that this cable was a short distance below that laid by the California State Telegraph Company. The latter extended from Albert Crescent to Brownsville.

(34) Edmund Conway, *Diaries*.

Hope, B.C., August 18, 1865.

To Mr. Grelley, Colonial Hotel, New Westminster.

Send a bottle of champagne to the Telegraph Office to Mr. Conway with the compliments of

Landvoigt.[35]

Champagne was apparently abundant in those days, for on August 26, when the line was completed to Yale, another request came over the wire directing Mr. Grelley to deliver a bottle to J. W. Pitfield, the Extension Company's New Westminster agent.[36]

More important than these local frivolities was the telegram Conway received at Hope, on August 21, which informed him that the latest attempt to lay an Atlantic cable had ended in failure. Thus cheered on his way, Conway travelled on to Soda Creek, Alexandria, and Quesnelmouth. Construction gangs followed hard on his heels, and his diary records that the line was completed to Quesnel at 3 p.m. on September 14, " Great enthusiasm prevailing." The distance from New Westminster was 435 miles, and Conway might well feel satisfied with his brief season's work.

Far from being content to rest on his laurels, however, he turned his attention immediately to the all-important northern explorations. Here the plan of attack was threefold. In Russian-America, Kennicott was to push into the interior from St. Michael, with Fort Yukon as his first objective. That point reached, his parties were to push southward as far as possible. In British Columbia Pope was to start north from Quesnel, with the ultimate object of reaching Fort Yukon, if he did not first make contact with some of Kennicott's men. Finally, Conway had been instructed to have some one explore the Skeena, Nass, and Stikine rivers, both to gain some knowledge of the country through which they flowed, and with a view to carrying in supplies for the various survey parties that would be passing through the region.

This last assignment Conway gave to Captain Horace (" Tom ") Coffin, of the small sternwheel steamer *Union*. The

(35) *British Columbian*, August 19, 1865.
(36) *Ibid.*, August 29, 1865.

choice was a logical one, for the previous year Coffin had taken the *Union* to the Northwest Coast on a trading cruise, and in the course of his wanderings had pioneered steam navigation on the Skeena.[37] His activities in 1865 were summarized as follows in Conway's report to Colonel Bulkley:—

In compliance with your instructions of July 22d 1865, to have the northern rivers explored and supplies taken to our interior line of explorations, I beg leave to report, that I started the steamer *Union*, in command of Capt. Horace Coffin to make the necessary explorations. Captain Coffin left New Westminster on the 30th of August 1865, entered the mouth of Skeena river on the 15th of September. The steamer ascended the river 90 miles, at this point two canoes were loaded with supplies. They succeeded in getting them up to Agglegate village on the 28th of September, distance from the mouth of the river 216 miles.

I enclose a list of supplies, stored at this village, they will probably be consumed by Major Pope's party, as the village is within four days travel of, Connolly's, or Babine lake.

The steamer entered the mouth of Nasse river on the 9th of October and ascended 43 miles. The party succeeded in ascending with canoes forty miles above the steamer, total distance 83 miles. . . .

Captain Coffin considered it too late in the season to explore the Sticken, so he returned to New Westminster, arriving there on the 3d of November. I sent a full load of supplies on the steamer, thinking they might succeed in getting them to Stewarts lake. These supplies are stored at Fort Simpson, where they will come handy next year. I enclose you a list, in case you should need them. . . .[38]

Major Pope started his explorations from Quesnel on July 4. At first his party numbered twenty-five, but by the time he had reached Fort St. James the difficulty of transporting supplies had become apparent, and he reduced his force to fifteen. This number included Dr. J. T. Rothrock, the botanist, and Pope decided to send him on ahead to establish winter quarters for a select party of eight or ten men, while he himself looked after the supply problem. Rothrock left Fort St. James on August 7, and after some searching chose a site at the northern end of Takla Lake. There, with the expert help of George Blenkinsop, an old Hudson's Bay man, he built Bulkley House. Heavy frosts started by the end of the month, but the buildings were ready

(37) *See* Norman R. Hacking, "Steamboating on the Fraser in the 'Sixties,'" *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, X. (1946), p. 27.

(38) Conway to Bulkley, December 30, 1865; in Charles S. Bulkley, *Papers*, pp. 25–6. Conway itemized the cost of the expedition, which totalled $2,860.

before winter really commenced, and Pope succeeded in laying in adequate supplies. In addition, he was able to examine the whole of a proposed route for the telegraph from Quesnel to Bulkley House, by way of Fort St. James and Stuart Lake, and to submit a detailed report, complete with map, to Conway.[39]

Conway himself was ready to leave Quesnel on September 20, and spent exactly two months on a trip that took him first to Fort St. James and Bulkley House, and then on still farther north to Fort Connelly. This done, he returned to his headquarters in New Westminster, where he spent the next few months preparing for the resumption of construction-work in the spring.

In San Francisco, Colonel Bulkley was similarly employed. Amongst other things, a thorough overhauling of the Marine Service was necessary, and Bulkley passed a busy winter. The schooner *Milton Badger* was sold, as she had proven unsuitable for the Company's work. The steamer *George S. Wright,* which had shown herself to be a most useful little vessel, was reconditioned after a tempestuous ocean crossing from Kamchatka in which she had nearly gone to the bottom, taking Bulkley with her. The clipper ship *Nightingale* was purchased and made the flagship of the reconstituted fleet.[40] The barques *H. L. Rutger* and *Onward* were also acquired, and the sternwheeler *Mumford* was built specially to order on Puget Sound.

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(39) *See* Pope to Conway, November 6, 1865; Bulkley *Papers,* pp. 27–32. Additional details are given in Rothrock's long letter to E. O. S. Scholefield, dated January 11, 1913, in the Provincial Archives (*see* foot-note 23 *supra*). The party that wintered at Bulkley House celebrated Christmas as elaborately as circumstances permitted. For an account of the festivities *see British Columbian,* April 11, 1866; also Corday Mackay, "Christmas Day—Cloudy and Cold at B.C.'s Bulkley House, 1865," in magazine section, *Vancouver Daily Province,* December 22, 1945, where much of the original account is reprinted.

(40) The *Nightingale* had had a strange career. Built as a model clipper ship, intended to be placed on display at the time of the great London exhibition of 1851, she was sold at auction before completion, and after sailing as a merchantman for a time, was employed in the African slave trade. Ultimately she was seized, condemned, and purchased by the United States Navy Department, which used her as a guard and store ship during the Civil War. *See* E. W. Wright (ed.), *Lewis & Dryden's Marine History of the Pacific Northwest,* Portland, Ore., 1895, p. 149.

It was Bulkley's hope that these and the numerous smaller craft at the disposal of the Company would prevent a repetition of the delays that had made progress in 1865 less rapid than he had expected. In Alaska results had been particularly disappointing, for he had been unable to land Kennicott and his party at St. Michael before September. As a result, they had been able to do little more than establish winter quarters at Nulato, and make plans for the future. In Siberia, however, though months would pass before Bulkley was aware of the fact, Major Abasa and his three assistants were making phenomenal progress in their preliminary reconnaissance. George Kennan, one of the four, has left a detailed account of his adventures in the volume entitled *Tent Life in Siberia*, and for the present purpose it is sufficient to note that, in the course of only seven months, and in the dead of winter, the little party actually covered the immense distance from the mouth of the Amur to the mouth of the Anadyr. Moreover, as Abasa reported with obvious and justifiable pride, "the route of the telegraph-line [had been] located on the whole distance."[41]

So matters stood when the widely-scattered parties had finished their first seasons in the field.

The events of 1866 can be chronicled more briefly. So far as British Columbia is concerned, Captain Conway's summary report to Colonel Bulkley reviews the season's activities in adequate detail:—

San Francisco. Cal Febry 19th 1867

Col Charles Bulkley
Engineer-in-Chief
W.U.T. Russian Extension

Sir

I beg leave to lay before you a brief report of the season's work for 1866. In the fall of 1865 the only route known for operations, north of Fort Fraser, being by Fort St. James and Lake Tatla, I had six men employed at Quesnel during the winter, constructing large bateaux for the transportation of supplies and material from Quesnel. There were five strong, clinker built boats constructed, each to carry four tons. Fearing, that I would not be able to hire men for the boating parties at Quesnel, I determined to engage Stekine and other Indians from the coast, at New West-

(41) Abasa to Bulkley, April 10/March 29, 1866; in Bulkley *Papers*, p. 87.

minster, and take them up the wagon road. This afterwards proved a very fortunate move.

I arrived at Quesnel on the 1st of May, and succeeded, after great difficulty, in getting together 25 white men, with whom, and sixty animals, I commenced work on the 14th of May, eighteen miles north of Quesnel. Owing to the excitement created about the Big Bend gold mines, I found it almost impossible to hire men at Quesnel, which I did, by allowing them ten days pay. On the 17th of May my force was increased by the arrival of 25 chinamen. By the 1st of June I had 150 men; 86 in construction camp, 26 packers with 160 animals; 38 white men and Indians transporting supplies in bateaux between Quesnel and Fort Fraser. The Fraser river being very high, and the current consequently very swift, the boats had great difficulty in getting up to Fort Fraser and only succeeded in making two trips, when I was compelled to have the rest of our supplies brought up by the trail.

We constructed the Telegraph road, and line to latitude 55.42 N. and longitude 128.15 W. The distance from Quesnel, by the road, is computed at 440 miles, and by the wire 378 miles. There are fifteen stations built, a log house, with chimney, door and windows, 25 miles apart. We built bridges over all small streams, that were not fordable, corduroyed swamps. All hillsides too steep for animals to travel over, were graded, from 3 to five feet wide. The average width of clearing the wood for the wire, is, in standing timber, 20 feet; and in fallen timber, 12 feet. All underbrush and small timber is cleared to the ground, thus leaving the road fit for horses, travelling at the rate of, from 30 to 50 miles per day. Double wires are stretched across all large rivers. Number of poles put up 9246. Boats are built for crossing the Bulkley and Westroad Rivers.

The Coast party, 23 men, under command of Jas. L. Butler, left Victoria on Steamer *Mumford* on July 5th; they succeeded in landing at Fort Stager (Skeena River) 150 miles of material and 12000 rations. They also transported to Shakesville on the Stekine river 4500 Rations, and left at the mouth of the Stekine over 200 miles of material, and near 20,000 Rations.

Owing to the uncertainty of our route, and the fast approaching winter, we were compelled to suspend work on the 2d of October. The party returned to the Skena River, from the point they had reached beyond it, and came down to Fort Simpson in five flat bottomed boats, constructed at Fort Stager. On the 18th of October the party left Fort Simpson on Steamers *Otter* and *Mumford* for New Westminster, where they were paid off during the latter part of October. The accompanying journal gives the amount of work done each day, and the force employed. I also forward the map of our route, which will describe the country in detail much better than I can possibly do in a report.[42]

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(42) Unfortunately the reports and maps to which reference is made in this and other letters are not included in the *Papers* of Colonel Bulkley at present available.

In concluding this brief report, I can assure you, that we constructed in every respect, a first class line, omitting nothing, that would help in making it a good working, and durable line. It runs through an extremely favourable country, and is constructed in such a manner, that it can be kept in repair with but little difficulty, and at not a very great expense.

I cannot speak too highly of the Officers and men employed in the American Division during the past season, they overcame all obstacles cheerfully and willingly. Mr. Butler, commanding the coast party, deserves great credit for the energy displayed by him in transporting supplies up the Skena and Stekeen Rivers. The Division Quarter Master Mr. Burrage, gave great satisfaction, and kept the party well supplied with provisions and material. The foremen, Messrs. Decker and Bradley displayed great energy, and left behind them first class work.

I am very respectfully
Yours most obedt. servant
(Signed) E. Conway
Late Supt American Division[43]

In addition to being superintendent of construction, Conway was also given direct charge of explorations in 1866. These were devoted, first, to the task of finding the best route from Fort Fraser to the Skeena River, and, secondly, to probing the mysteries of the great area still farther to the north, lying between the Skeena, Nass, and Stikine rivers.

Conway seems never to have been satisfied with the Fort St. James–Bulkley House–Fort Connelly route that he and Pope had examined in 1865: hence the explorations from Fort Fraser. He thought first of carrying the line through the Babine country, but inquiries led him to believe that it would be practicable to build farther west, and carry it in an almost direct line from Fort Fraser to Hagwilget, an Indian village on the Bulkley River about 3 miles from its junction with the Skeena. In May and June of 1866 two of his men went over this route carefully, and found it satisfactory in every essential. Conway promptly adopted it, and, as the report already quoted indicates, the line was completed over the whole distance before the season ended. Half a century later this portion of the Overland Telegraph was paralleled very closely by what is now the Prince Rupert branch of the Canadian National Railways. From Fort Fraser (to use the place-names of to-day) railroad and telegraph alike followed

(43) Conway to Bulkley, San Francisco, February 19, 1867; Bulkley *Papers*, pp. 159–60. (Paragraphing revised; otherwise quoted verbatim.)

the Endako River, skirted Burns Lake and Decker Lake, and then followed the Bulkley to Hagwilget.[44]

From the latter point the telegraph crossed over to the junction of the Skeena and Kispiox rivers; and near the present village of Kispiox the Western Union Extension crew built one of their stations, Fort Stager.[45] This was as far as the line was ever placed in operation. Construction was carried about 25 miles up the Kispiox River (which was known for a time as the Collins River), but the wire simply ended in the wilderness.[46]

The northern explorations were commenced during the winter of 1865–66 by Pope and Rothrock, who used their winter quarters at Bulkley House as a sort of base camp. After two shorter trips, undertaken to enable him to learn more about the technique of winter travel, Rothrock and two companions set out in January, 1866, explored the country to the westward, reached the Skeena River, and descended it as far as Kitsalas before turning homeward. Late in February, Pope, accompanied by George Blenkinsop and two Indians, left Bulkley House, determined to reach and descend the Stikine River. This extraordinary trip of some 500 miles they accomplished in 70 days, despite great hardships and privations. In March, Rothrock set out once more from Bulkley House, and made a prolonged journey northward. His route is not known in any detail. "When I was there," he himself has explained, "the country was unnamed—no one knew, except by conjecture, where any of the small streams went, further than that they went East or West. I had no means of fixing my position astronomically, except approximately and

(44) By rail, the distance from Fort Fraser is 192 miles.

(45) Named after General Anson Stager, under whom Bulkley had served in the United States Military Telegraphs.

(46) The route of the Overland Telegraph throughout its length is shown clearly on the so-called "Trutch map," which was compiled in 1870, but includes additions to January, 1871. The correct title is: *Map of British Columbia to the 56th Parallel, North Latitude. Compiled and drawn at the Lands and Works Office, Victoria, B.C., under the direction of the Honble. J. W. Trutch . . . Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works and Surveyor General. 1871.* London: Edward Stanford, 1871. On this map the telegraph-line is carried up the east bank of the Kispiox for 40 miles or more; then it crosses the river, and ends in a valley a few miles to the west.

crudely by the altitude of the pole star." Thutade Lake and some branch of the Finlay River were the only landmarks that could be identified with any certainty. Rothrock's own opinion was that he probably reached a point about 70 miles E.S.E. of Dease Lake, which would bring him very near the upper reaches of the Stikine.[47]

Other expeditions were made from Shakesville, a vanished village on the Stikine that seems to have been located a few miles below the present Glenora. Scovell, one of Conway's men, after being forced back in a first attempt, succeeded during the summer in reaching Kuldo, on the upper Skeena. Byrnes, a member of another party, who had explored the Fort Fraser–Hagwilget route, and later struck out into the country north of the Skeena, actually travelled 1,500 miles between April and October. "Too much cannot be said in praise of these men," Conway wrote to Colonel Bulkley, "the hardships which they had to encounter, were fearful; being compelled to pack their blankets and supplies on their backs, and this through a country covered with underbrush, fallen timber, swollen rivers, and other numerous obstacles."[48]

It is remarkable to find that neither in Conway's reports, nor in a lengthy communication addressed by Colonel Bulkley to the Executive Committee of the Western Union Telegraph Company as late as March 1, 1867, is any reference made to the successful laying of the Atlantic cable. On July 27, 1866, the steamship *Great Eastern* had nosed into Heart's Content Harbour, Newfoundland, and her crew had brought ashore the end of a cable that stretched all the way to Ireland. There is an impression abroad that this event led to the immediate abandonment of the Overland Telegraph scheme; but this is not so. Work continued in British Columbia until October, when it would normally have ceased for the winter; and even then Conway sent Thomas Elwyn to winter quarters at Shakesville, on the Stikine, with instructions to "send out small parties towards the Skeena, Take

(47) Rothrock to Scholefield, January 11, 1913. MS., Provincial Archives.

(48) Conway to Bulkley, San Francisco, February 19, 1867; Bulkley *Papers*, p. 162. This report on the explorations covers pp. 161–2.

and Chilcat Rivers, and also towards Dease House and Yukon."[49] There still remained the hope that the cable would fall silent, as its predecessor had done in 1858, and until time returned a verdict upon its reliability, the Overland project remained alive.

In British Columbia, it is true, it may be said to have continued to exist only in a state of suspended animation; but in Alaska and Siberia, where news travelled slowly, a year passed before the great enterprise was abandoned. The official decision to stop work was taken by the Directors of the Western Union Company in March, 1867, and on March 27 William Orton, Vice-President of the Company, wrote to Secretary of State Seward:—

> All doubts concerning the capacity and efficiency of the ocean cables, are now dispelled, and the work of construction on the Russian line, after an expenditure of $3,000,000, has been discontinued.[50]

In his reply Seward recognized the facts of the case, and continued:—

> I would not have the Atlantic cable become dumb again if thereby I could immediately secure the success of the Inter-Continental Pacific Telegraph enterprise which was committed to your hands. Nevertheless, I confess to a profound disappointment in the suspension of the latter enterprise.[51]

The purchase of Alaska was pending at this time, and no doubt Seward was disappointed that the completed line had not been carried that far. Progress in Russian-America had, on the whole, been less rapid than elsewhere. This was partly due to the death of Robert Kennicott, who collapsed suddenly at Nulato in May, 1866. Colonel Bulkley appointed W. H. Dall as his successor, but it was some time before word of Kennicott's death reached the outside world, and Dall could arrive to take over. After spending the winter at Nulato, Dall and his party started up the Yukon River on May 26, 1867, still blissfully ignorant of what had happened in the outside world. On June 23 they

(49) *Ibid.*, p. 162. It was in the course of the winter explorations in 1866–67 that Telegraph Creek, on the Stikine River, was named. This has led many to assume that the Overland Telegraph actually reached the Stikine, but this is not so. Telegraph Creek was the spot at which it was *intended* that the line should cross. It happens to be the spot at which the Dominion Government Telegraph Line to the Yukon actually does cross the river to-day.

(50) Reid, *The Telegraph in America*, p. 516.

(51) *Ibid.*

reached Fort Yukon, and there saw copies of the *Nor' Wester*, a journal published in the Red River Settlement, that announced the successful laying of the Atlantic cable. Six days later an advance party returned from a winter trip to Fort Selkirk, and on July 8 the whole expedition left for St. Michael, where they arrived on the 25th. There they were met with the news that the Collins enterprise had been abandoned; and Frederick Whymper recalls that the men's feelings caused them " to hang black cloth on the telegraph-poles, and put them into mourning."[52]

In Siberia, actual construction of the telegraph-line was well started, but the work had been much delayed by the late arrival of the supply-ships. Major Abasa and his men waited weary months before the *Clara Bell* arrived from San Francisco in mid-August of 1866 with 50,000 insulators and brackets, and for other essential equipment they had to await the coming of the *Palmetto*, on September 19. A third vessel, the *Onward*, got only as far as Petropavlovsk, which meant that for immediate purposes she did not arrive at all.[53]

News of the success of the Atlantic cable arrived on June 1, 1867, when the New Bedford whaler *Sea Breeze* entered the harbour of Gizhiga, the port at which most of the supplies for the Siberian parties were to be delivered. Six weeks later, on July 15, the slow-moving *Onward* arrived with orders to cease work. The summer was spent in gathering up the widely-scattered construction parties, and early in October the barque set sail for San Francisco. The last of the Overland Telegraph officials to leave Siberia included two of the first to arrive—James Mahood and George Kennan. They, and two companions, decided to return home by way of European Russia, and they set out on their great overland trek soon after the *Onward* disappeared over the horizon.[54]

The collapse of the Overland Telegraph was a severe blow to the Western Union Company, but it made no attempt to shirk the unpleasant financial consequences. The Company issued

(52) Wymper, *Travel and Adventure in Alaska*, p. 241.

(53) *See* Kennan, *Tent Life in Siberia*, pp. 369 *et seq.* A great store of information about the Siberian division of the Collins venture is to be found in the many letters from Major Abasa included in the Bulkley *Papers*.

(54) Kennan, *Tent Life in Siberia*, p. 421 *et seq.*

$3,170,292 in bonds to redeem the Extension stock, and although this meant that it was footing the bill, the market value of Western Union stock did not fall. "Some denounced this proceeding," one authority notes, "but as the stockholders [of the Extension Company] were almost wholly also holders of the Western Union Company stock, it was generally acquiesced in."[55]

Collins himself seems to have fared reasonably well financially, and to have emerged from the enterprise with a modest competence. In 1876, at the age of 63, he moved to New York, and took up residence in the St. Denis Hotel, in lower Manhattan. There he lived for no less than twenty-five years, and during that time he handled his investments so well that when he died on January 18, 1900, at the ripe old age of 88, he left a considerable fortune. Seventeen years later his niece and heir, Kate Collins Brown, bequeathed the sum of $550,000 to New York University, the income from which was to be used for scholarships in the University's College of Arts and Pure Science, and in the College of Engineering. In the interval Collins himself had been so completely forgotten that these scholarships had been awarded annually for a decade or more before anyone thought of drawing attention to the ultimate source from which the money came.[56] To-day he still remains a forgotten man, although his world-girdling scheme is recalled now and then by a journalist in search of a good story that has both a modern touch and a romantic flavour.[57]

The fate of the hundreds of miles of telegraph line that the Extension Company actually constructed in British Columbia is not without interest. When the "cease work" signal was received, a blockhouse was built at the end of the line and filled with equipment "as a silent hope that the Atlantic venture might

(55) Reid, *The Telegraph in America*, p. 517.

(56) Mr. Donald McNicol seems to have been primarily responsible for the effort that was made to find out something about Collins personally, and bring it to the attention of the University and the students receiving the awards. Most of the details given are taken from the sketch of Collins's career prepared by Professor Philip B. McDonald, of New York University, to which reference has already been made.

(57) For a recent example *see* W. H. Deppermann, "Two Cents an Acre," in *North American Review*, 245 (1938), pp. 126–33. This article was abridged and reprinted by the *Reader's Digest*.

again result in disaster."[58] Fort Stager was kept manned until 1869, when John McCutcheon, the last operator there, abandoned the station and left "with thirteen large canoes loaded with provisions and clothing."[59] In the meantime the line had remained in active commercial operation as far as Quesnel, and in 1868 it had been extended to Barkerville. However, the Western Union Telegraph Company took little interest in it, and in February, 1871, the Government of British Columbia secured a perpetual lease of all the Company's lines that lay within the Colony. In July of the same year British Columbia became a Province of Canada, and the Dominion Government, in accordance with the terms of union, took over the lease. During the next decade the line to the Cariboo was repaired and largely rebuilt, and various new lines and cables were added to the system, including an all-Canadian connection with Victoria. Finally, in September, 1880, the Government purchased all the Western Union Company's property and privileges. It secured an extraordinary bargain, for the price paid was only $24,000, and the deal ended subsidies and brought in revenues that between them amounted to $25,000, even in the first years.

Between Quesnel and Fort Stager the line was left to go to wrack and ruin. W. F. (later Sir William) Butler has described how he chanced upon its remains in the course of the great journey described in *The Wild North Land*:—

> Crossing the wide Nacharcole River, and continuing south for a few miles, we reached a broadly cut trail which bore curious traces of past civilization. Old telegraph poles stood at intervals along the forest-cleared opening, and rusted wires[60] hung in loose festoons down from their tops, or

(58) R. N. Young, "Collins Overland Telegraph," in *Telegraph and Telephone Age*, July 1, 1922, p. 298.

(59) *Ibid.* John McCutcheon later settled in the Chilliwack district, where he died relatively recently. Other long-lived survivors of the Overland Telegraph days included George Kennan, who died in 1924, and Leonard Bright, who joined the *Nightingale* as a cabin boy in 1866. He was still alive, aged 87, in 1934.

(60) The reference to rust recalls the fact that it is often assumed that the wire used would be copper. Mr. Donald McNicol is of the opinion that it was 8-gauge iron wire, and notes the fact that the Indians are said to have used bits of it for nails, which would scarcely have been practicable if the wire had been copper. To the best of his knowledge copper-covered iron wire was first used in 1872, and single-strand copper wire did not come into

lay tangled amid the growing brushwood of the cleared space. A telegraph in the wilderness! What did it mean?

When civilization once grasps the wild, lone spaces of the earth it seldom releases its hold; yet here civilization had once advanced her footsteps, and apparently shrunk back again frightened at her boldness. It was even so; this trail, with its ruined wire, told of the wreck of a great enterprise.[61]

This chance encounter occurred in May of 1873. Here and there in the wilderness great piles of wire, insulators, and other equipment survived, and may still survive. Occasionally the Indians made use of these materials, as, for instance, in the construction of the celebrated bridge at Hagwilget. But as decade followed decade, two or three place-names, notably Telegraph Creek and the Bulkley River, became the most enduring survival of the great enterprise. The telegraph-line itself, and the memory of Perry McDonough Collins, whose imagination and tireless effort had brought it into existence, virtually disappeared.

CORDAY MACKAY.

VANCOUVER, B.C.

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use until 1877. *See* carbon copy of letter, McNicol to Professor D. W. Hering, December 20, 1936, in McNicol Collection.

(61) W. F. Butler, *The Wild North Land*, 4th edition, London, 1874, pp. 333–4.

THE OREGON TREATY: FINIS TO JOINT OCCUPATION.*

Fur-traders, explorers, missionaries, propagandists, pioneer farmers, international diplomacy—all the influences that might stimulate occupation and possession are to be found in the story of Old Oregon. While settlement was being extended to the new frontier of the Great Lakes area in Canada, and to the Mississippi River in the United States, the frontier itself, by jumping the central plains, was receding to the Pacific Coast. The Oregon country and California became the new frontier in the 1840's.

For twenty-five years the joint occupation initiated by Great Britain and the United States in 1818 had worked successfully in Oregon. The arrangement was satisfactory so long as the actual occupants of the area were neither numerous nor permanent, but only transient fur-traders of either nationality. Almost the only permanent residents were the officials of the Hudson's Bay Company, whose superintendent, Dr. John McLoughlin, had his headquarters at Fort Vancouver, on the Columbia River. From that vantage point he dispensed high, low, and middle justice to Indian and fur-trader alike from Alaska to California. His easy-going existence had been interrupted in the mid-thirties by the arrival from the Eastern United States of Catholic and Protestant missionaries bent on converting the Indians. Their spiritual message made scant impression on the unregenerate natives, but their letters home describing the country stirred in the restless citizenry of the Atlantic and trans-Appalachian states a desire to enter in and to possess such a goodly land. There were, it is true, millions of unsettled acres in the Louisiana Purchase nearer home; but this the prospective settlers disdained as a desert country because of its treeless nature. There was presented to the world then, in the early forties, the strange spectacle of thousands of people travelling painfully 2,000 miles

* Prize essay in the contest sponsored by the British Columbia Historical Association in commemoration of the centenary of the signing of the Oregon Treaty, June 15, 1846.

across a fair and fertile plain to make their homes in the wilderness beyond.[1]

But the long road to Oregon was known many years before the settlers began to march. The fur-traders had found it in the early twenties, and had used it year after year in their journeys to and fro between Oregon and St. Louis, their base of supply. In 1842 the United States Government had sent out John C. Frémont to survey and map the route. His map furnished the migrating farmers with such guidance as they needed over the well-known trail up the Platte River, through South Pass, and down the Snake and Columbia rivers to the Promised Land beyond.

With the advent of settlers, and as the forest gave way to the farm and the market town, boundary-lines became necessary. Joint occupation became impracticable. When the rivalries of trading companies pushing into the wilderness are followed by settlement there ensues a life-and-death struggle between fur-traders and settlers. Canadian and United States development has been characterized by such struggles. The fur trade must give way to law and order, and to a conventionalized society with its rules and recognized magistrates; and with the emergence of these, people begin to think in terms of government. Politics enters upon the scene, bringing to the fore a new set of interests, not least of which are sentiment, prestige, and nationalism. The incoming American settlers in Oregon wanted the form of government to which they had been accustomed in the Eastern United States. With characteristic frontier disdain of international agreements, they took possession of the Willamette Valley, established a provisional government in 1843, and called on their country for support. Such was the situation in Oregon in 1846, the year destined to be so fateful in the history of the Pacific Coast from Alaska to Mexico.

No other phase of the history of the Pacific Northwest has been investigated more thoroughly by historians than the Oregon boundary dispute. Weighty tomes, scholarly articles, and appealing stories in seemingly unlimited quantity, have been written on the subject, some amusing and many authoritative,

(1) E. O. S. Scholefield, *British Columbia from the earliest times to the present*, Vancouver, 1914, I., p. 446.

some pro-British and many pro-American. The claims of each protagonist have been investigated and interpreted by sincere and painstaking scholars who have presented their evidence as impartially as is humanly possible. In particular, to Dr. Frederick Merk must go credit for much intensive research, which he has presented in a series of admirable articles written over the course of three decades. From the weight of evidence that has been compiled, it would appear that a discussion of claims, with intent to justify one or the other side, is not only difficult but also useless. It would be an academic investigation, the conclusions of which could not but be influenced by personal opinion. So numerous and conflicting were the claims, and so inextricably bound were they to 19th century Imperialism and sectional politics, that all that may be attempted profitably by the student of the problem is a presentation of claims to the disputed area in the light of the Treaty concluding the controversy, and in relation to the effect upon subsequent history of the Pacific Northwest. Whose claims were the more valid is a matter of small moment now. Speculations as to the " if's " of history are entertaining and diverting but neither profitable nor constructive. The paramount questions then, are rather why the decision formulated in 1846 was favourable to one country and not to the other, what cast the decision in that country's favour, and what the effect has been upon the subsequent social, political, and economic development of the area.

When the fate of Old Oregon became a matter of international importance, involving the immediate prospect of war, the claims to the disputed territory were investigated in full both by Great Britain and by the United States. Every shred of supporting evidence was advanced by Lord Aberdeen, the British Foreign Secretary, and by James Buchanan, the American Secretary of State. These claims will be briefly summarized; briefly, because they warrant no lengthy consideration. When the Treaty was finally signed on June 15, 1846, its decision was not contingent upon any superiority of claims. Although the Conventions of 1818 and 1826 had left the territory west of the Rocky Mountains open to both nations, the final settlement was not in the least affected by them. Neither prior discovery, superior exploitation, nor more advanced settlement gave the area to the United

States practically on her own terms. This was brought about by a combination of national bluff in America and famine in Ireland. By means of the successful campaign slogan of "54° 40′ or fight," adopted by the belligerent President Polk, he was eminently successful in arousing to fever pitch public interest in the "re-occupation of Oregon." By so doing, he tipped the scales in favour of conciliation in England. Polk's superior diplomacy, or bluff, triumphed over Sir Robert Peel's party politics. Throughout the 19th century, from the Treaty of Ghent in 1814, through the "roaring forties" and the period of Manifest Destiny in the United States, and down to the Spanish-American War that closed the century, Anglo-American relations, though often dangerously strained, remained peaceful. It can scarcely be disputed, however, that this was due more to a conscious effort on the part of England to avoid war, than it was to the desire of the United States to preserve peace. This year of 1846, which Bernard De Voto has termed the *Year of Decision*,[2] was an obstacle in the path of United States nationalism, which had taken to itself the sobriquet of Manifest Destiny, and which was capitalized upon by the State Department in Washington, ever on the alert to follow economic penetration by political dominion. Such was the policy followed in Oregon.

In the apportionment of North America, the Pacific slope, like the eastern portion of the continent, was a confusion of overlapping claims based on desultory explorations and an indefinite and uncertain occupancy. There is agreement among historians now that the claims of both the United States and Great Britain to all of the area under dispute—the land lying between the Columbia River and the 54th parallel—were "extravagant and unsound."[3] "Neither nation," Dr. Keenleyside says, "had a perfect, or even a strong, case."[4] Behind the controversy lay a tangle of claims based on the activities of both sides in exploration and occupation. The voyages of Cook and Vancouver, the surveys of the Columbia River made by Captain Gray and Lieutenant Broughton, the expeditions of Mackenzie and Lewis and

(2) Bernard A. De Voto, *Year of Decision, 1846*, New York, 1943, *passim.*

(3) F. H. Soward, "President Polk and the Canadian Frontier," in Canadian Historical Association, *Annual Report, 1930*, p. 71.

(4) H. L. Keenleyside, *Canada and the United States*, New York, 1929, p. 205.

Clark, the activities of the Pacific Fur and the North West companies, were all advanced as justifying title to the whole area. The situation was further complicated by Russian and Spanish claims. These were soon defined when the treaty of 1819 between Spain and the United States placed the northern limit of Spanish claims at the 42nd parallel, and when Russia, by treaties with the United States in 1824 and with Great Britain the following year, agreed to stay north of 54° 40′. But even these agreements, which reduced the number of potential rivals, added new complexities to the claims of the two who remained.

A further complication was created by the question of Astoria. This post, which Astor had established at the mouth of the Columbia River in 1811, had fallen victim to the vicissitudes of the War of 1812. Rather than see it captured without recompense, Astor's local representative had prudently sold out to the North West Company. Nonetheless, a British naval commander had taken formal occupation after the post had changed hands, and this action, according to the American view, brought it within scope of the clause of the Treaty of Ghent which provided for a mutual return of conquests. An expedition was sent to effect a symbolic reoccupation in 1817, and Castlereagh, the British Foreign Secretary, while protesting against the mode of procedure, acknowledged the validity of the American contention. In 1826 Canning was to regret the action of his predecessor[5] because the event added strength to American claims in the Oregon region.

So the stage was set for one of the greatest dramas in the history of America, a determined contest between Great Britain, which agreed with Sir Alexander Mackenzie, who in 1801 was moved to declare that wherever the northwestern boundary-line should strike the Mississippi, "it . . . must be continued West, till it terminates in the Pacific Ocean, to the South of the Columbia;"[6] and the United States, whose most fiery citizens

(5) A. S. Morton, *A History of the Canadian West to 1871*, London, 1939, p. 734. A confidential memorandum prepared by H. U. Addington for Canning said May 2, 1846: "That retrocession was in fact merely a matter of form: the fort was delivered up on paper, but retained possession of by the British, in whose hands it has remained ever since."

(6) Alexander Mackenzie, *Voyages . . . to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans*, London, 1801, p. 399.

shouted " 54° 40′ or fight," while others declared that the line of 49° would be a satisfactory boundary. At a number of times during the long-drawn-out controversy Great Britain might have had all the territory above 49°, but her statesmen were unwilling to yield what they thought was the better part of the territory, a part which they claimed tenaciously.

A proper analysis of the subject necessitates a survey of the area at stake. It was not such an extensive territory as at first sight it would seem. It appeared as though the whole of the Oregon country was at issue, the vast domain extending from the Rocky Mountains to the sea and from California to Alaska. But the area about which the dispute really centred was the comparatively limited area lying between the Columbia River and the 49th parallel, the area now constituting the central and western thirds of the State of Washington.

The British looked upon the Columbia River as an essential artery of the fur trade and a vital outlet for the whole transmontane region. The Americans were determined to secure possession of the Straits of Juan de Fuca, not so much because of the value of the intervening territory as because the area of Puget Sound offered the only good harbours north of San Francisco. In fact, had San Francisco been in American possession at the time, it is possible that the furore over Oregon might not have been so great. Britain rejected the suggestion that the 49th parallel be extended to the Pacific, and the United States refused to concede the Columbia River as the boundary. As a result the final settlement was left in abeyance, and the Convention of 1818 provided for joint occupation for a period of ten years.[7] Negotiations were renewed in 1826, following the elim-

(7) Canada, Department of External Affairs, *Treaties and Agreements affecting Canada in force between His Majesty and the United States of America, 1814–1925*, Ottawa, 1927, p. 16. Article III. reads:—

" It is agreed that any country that may be claimed by either party on the Northwest coast of America, westward of the Stoney Mountains, shall, together with its Harbours, Bays and Creeks, and the navigation of all rivers within the same, be free and open for the term of ten years from the date of the signature of the Present Convention, to the Vessels, Citizens and Subjects of the two powers: it being well understood, that this agreement is not to be construed to the prejudice of any claim which either of the two High Contracting Powers may have to any part of the said Country, nor shall it be taken to affect the claims of any other Power or State to any

ination of Russia and Spain. But neither side would recede from its territorial claims, and the offer of the United States to concede free navigation of the Columbia was no more acceptable than the offer by Great Britain of a harbour on the Straits. In 1827 the arrangements for joint occupation were in consequence extended, this time without limit, but with the provision that they could be abrogated by either side on twelve months' notice. This may have been a play for time on the part of the American Government in order to populate the country.

The provisional arrangements did in the end work to the advantage of the United States, as they had hoped. Although at this period it was the British alone who were in effective occupation of the disputed area, that occupation was represented only by the Hudson's Bay Company. There was little immediate prospect of a more substantial settlement from British territory farther east. The Hudson's Bay Company favoured agricultural establishments near the posts for the sake of supplies, and when the problem of more extensive occupation became pressing some efforts were made to promote a pioneer movement from the Red River settlement. But there was no such population surplus available as that which was pushing the American frontier of settlement steadily westward, and which was by that time flowing over the Rockies to claim the Pacific Coast.

This advance was powerfully assisted by the attitude of the Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company in the Columbia District. Of all the Scotsmen who lifted the fur trade to its days of greatness none was more remarkable that Dr. John McLoughlin, the " White Eagle " to the Indian and the " King of Old Oregon " to the settler. For twenty years he ruled his vast domain, managing the widespread activities of the fur trade, which included raising stock and growing grain as well as trapping. His remarkable personality made him the unquestioned authority around which life in Old Oregon revolved.

But his virtual sovereignty, accepted by the community over which he had charge, could not long survive an influx of settlement. He himself recognized the fertility of Oregon and the inevitability of eventual occupation of the land. Before long his

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part of the said Country, the only object of the High Contracting Parties, in that respect, being to prevent disputes and differences amongst themselves."

fears were confirmed. The American settler with his plough was following the footsteps of the profit-seeking trader who had first exploited the wilderness. In this phase the missionaries played the leading rôle as pioneers.

The first arrivals were the Methodists in 1834, intent on bringing spiritual enlightenment to the Indians. They were followed within a year by the Presbyterians. Their religious activities were not spectacular; their plaints were those of all missionaries. Braves who were converted during the tedious winter tended to backslide when spring came. Indian children adopted by the missionaries tended to die, with Christian resignation, no doubt, but with unhappy frequency. But in more mundane activities the talents of the newcomers found more successful employment. The Methodists were soon impressed with the prospects of the Willamette Valley, directed there on the excellent advice of Dr. McLoughlin. They abandoned active preaching and devoted themselves to land promotion. Their glowing descriptions found an audience when the depression of 1837 moved some of the restless and discontented on the old frontier to try their fortunes farther west. In 1839 a shipload of settlers came out by way of Cape Horn. An overland party in 1840 heralded the beginning of a new migration. Three years later the first large company made the overland journey from Missouri; a short while later other pilgrims combined a land and sea trip through the Panama. "The Plains over, the Isthmus across, or the Horn around?" became the query asked of each new arrival. By the end of 1843 some 400 settlers had established themselves, chiefly along the Willamette. In that year a definite movement got under way which brought an increasing flood of immigrants, whose total was over 10,000 by 1848.

No sooner had a compact settlement developed on the Willamette than the settlers began thinking in terms of self-government and self-protection. As their dependence on the Hudson's Bay Company decreased their aggressiveness grew. The result was the provisional government, formed at Champoeg in 1843, by which the Americans formed a compact for mutual protection and to secure peace and prosperity among themselves. For the sake of safety McLoughlin thought he must co-operate with that body. His action was interpreted in a false light by his Com-

pany, but he felt that to maintain peace and to secure order such action was best until the two governments could settle the question of the boundary. He tried to avoid compromising British claims to the Columbia River boundary by keeping the settlers south of the river. Any settlement meant danger, and recognition of the provisional government seriously weakened the British position. McLoughlin argued that any other course would precipitate a storm to which the British must yield or be prepared to resist by force. But the Hudson's Bay Company was only too well aware that the territory in any case was about to slip from its grasp. The American settlers were now making vigorous representations to Washington, and sentiment throughout the country had been aroused to the point where the possession of Oregon had become a national issue.

It was now clear that affairs in Oregon were approaching a crisis. The British, seeing the trend toward agricultural economy, realized that the fur trade was doomed and that they could only hold the Columbia Valley by following the American example. Dr. McLoughlin, though he had been cordial in his treatment of the American settlers, quickly grasped the inexorable, and urged upon the British Government the adoption of a colonizing policy, but the aid he sought was refused. Owing partly to this disappointment, partly to a division of his authority in the Columbia Department, and partly to personal animosity to George Simpson, his superior in the Company, he resigned the leadership he had so honourably held, letting the drift of Western life pursue its own course.

Sensing battle in the air, both Americans and British opened the fray with skirmishes. Since there was no established authority to make land grants and to keep order, they engaged in bitter contests over titles and breaches of the peace, each side accusing the other of making fraudulent entries, of selling firearms and whisky to the Indians, and undercutting in the fur market. Desirous of bringing the whole region under their control, and chafing under the monopoly enjoyed by the Hudson's Bay Company, Englishmen on the ground requested their home government in London to unite the Oregon country with Canada. With equal force the pioneer Americans in Oregon urged Wash-

ington to settle the issue by giving them self-government and assuring them of protection.

Up to this point the issue was of a purely local nature. The settlers on the American side of the river and the Hudson's Bay men on the northern shore bandied words and brandished clubs, and each group examined its own claims, forwarding as many as could be substantiated, and a few that could not, to their respective governments. But with the presidential election of 1844 the controversy assumed international importance, involving threats of war. The Democratic Party's platform, drawn up at the party convention in Baltimore, and on which James K. Polk was elected President, ended with this resolution:—

> . . . That our title to the whole of the territory of Oregon is clear and unquestionable; that no portion of the same ought to be surrendered to England or any other power, and that the re-occupation of Oregon and the re-annexation of Texas at the earliest practicable period are great American measures which this convention recommends to the cordial support of the Democracy of the Union.[8]

The Oregon debates in Congress, brief though they were, were full of language uncomplimentary to the British, which John Bull found wounding to his pride. In the person of the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, John Bull swelled with hardly suppressed anger and professed to believe the situation serious.[9] Clearly his government was faced by an American democracy recently victorious at the polls, a democracy which was inaugurating its return to office with a vigorous twist of the British lion's tail. Then came the new President's assertion, in his inaugural address of March 4, 1845, that:—

> Nor will it become in a less degree my duty to assert and maintain by all constitutional means the right of the United States to that portion of our territory which lies beyond the Rocky Mountains. Our title to the country of Oregon is " clear and unquestionable," and already are our people preparing to perfect that title by occupying it with their wives and children. . . . To us belongs the duty of protecting them. . . .[10]

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(8) Scholefield, *British Columbia*, I., p. 448.

(9) T. P. Martin, " Free Trade and the Oregon Question," in *Facts and Factors in Economic History*, Cambridge, Mass., 1932, p. 483n. Sir Samuel O'Malley proposed, on March 1, to take over a large body of Irish and hold the Oregon country.

(10) James D. Richardson, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789–1897*, Washington, 1897, IV., p. 381.

From this point on the issue becomes clouded in a maze of proposals and rejections, diplomatic messages, and vituperation.

Had Great Britain not had what her Government under Sir Robert Peel considering more pressing problems to settle; had the Government not had to rely upon Whig support; or had there not been an advocate of conciliation, in the person of Lord Aberdeen, in the Foreign Office, war would probably have been the outcome.

The thread of British party politics, discernible in the fabric of American history at many points, has woven discord more frequently than harmony. Twice it has produced war. It came near to doing so in the Oregon controversy. It was the dread of party clamour that induced the British Government to postpone a settlement until passions in the United States had been aroused almost to the point of explosion. Because of a distorted Opposition charge of "capitulation," as applied to the Webster-Ashburton award of 1842, the British Government was restrained from agreeing to a capitulation that was not only real but also necessary in Oregon.

For more than twenty-five years, and through five negotiations, British Governments had resisted American pretensions to the triangle on the ground of the superiority of the British title to it. To descend from this height was not easy. Since the earlier negotiations the triangle had been occupied by British subjects in considerable numbers—servants of the Hudson's Bay Company. Practically no Americans were settled there—none so far as Lord Aberdeen knew. If, in diplomacy, possession was nine points of the law, the triangle was already British. To give it up, to retreat from the Columbia River boundary, was to abandon British vested interests and to expatriate British subjects. It was to retreat from the boundary of British prestige.

Lord Aberdeen, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs in the Conservative Government of Peel, was eager for a pacific adjustment of all outstanding differences with the United States. Conciliatory and peace-loving, he saw nothing within the triangle that was worth the risk of war. Of the territory itself he had a low opinion; he was well aware that the Columbia River could never be an outlet for Western Canada to the sea, and he recognized the essential reasonableness of the American demand for a share

in the harbours about the 49th parallel. Personally, he was willing as early as March, 1844, to settle the dispute on the basis of that parallel to the sea.

By December of 1845 it had been proven to the British Government that failure to compromise in external matters was unprofitable, with the result that by spring party politics were set aside *pro tem* in order that the dispute be settled. Polk, with his campaign cry of " 54° 40′ or fight," was not to be intimidated. Not even the Southern senators, who had no interest in the extension of free soil into Oregon, could have stopped Polk. The situation in England was such that conciliation and concession could not but triumph. In the autumn of 1845 three major crises faced the British Government, the least of which was the Oregon question. There was a harvest shortage of seemingly famine proportions. There was a Corn Law conflict of revolutionary intensity. Some writers[11] have seen in these domestic problems the reason for Britain's conciliatory attitude, but Dr. Merk has disproved adequately such a solution.[12] Merk's concluding remark is: " The thesis of the beneficent intervention of the bill [i.e., the Anti-Corn Law bill, which removed the tariff restrictions on grain imported, designed to appease the Middle Westerner on the Oregon question by opening British markets to their wheat] in the American crisis . . . is, in truth, the serving up of contemporary propaganda as History."

The free-trade movement in England may not have influenced directly the settlement of the problem in Oregon, but it did contribute its share. It did so by removing political obstacles to a policy of concession. In earlier negotiations British Governments had rejected again and again the proposal made by the American Government to divide Oregon by a line drawn along the 49th parallel to the sea. Lord Aberdeen regarded this line as a reasonable basis of partition. As early as March, 1844, he had been willing to accept it, stopping it short only at the coast so as not to sever Vancouver Island. The cabinet, however, was less pliant. The territory between the 49th parallel and the

(11) *See* St. G. L. Sioussat, " James Buchanan," in S. F. Bemis (*ed.*), *The American Secretaries of State and their Diplomacy*, New York, 1928, V.; and T. P. Martin, *op. cit.*, pp. 470–492.

(12) F. Merk, " The British Corn Crisis and the Oregon Treaty," in *Agricultural History*, VIII. (1934), pp. 95–123.

Columbia River, for which British Governments had held out, had become steadily more British since the first negotiations, as a result of the Hudson's Bay Company's occupation. A government surrendering it to the United States under such circumstances exposed itself to the Opposition charge of having abandoned British pride and honour. As Merk says, the chief obstacle to an amicable adjustment of the Oregon controversy during the critical years of 1845–46 was this political hazard.

The Anti-Corn Law crusade served to lessen this hazard. It did so by releasing in England a spirit of international conciliation. The free-trade doctrine was a gospel of peace. Its postulates were international good-will and the dependence of nations upon each other. The leaders of the Anti-Corn Law League, powerful in England, were conspicuous internationalists, friendly in particular toward the United States. Their contention was that the repeal of the Corn Laws would result in a permanent bond of friendship between the United States and England by means of trade. America would feed England, England would clothe America. In the Oregon crisis these leaders turned the militant fervour of a triumphant crusade into channels of Anglo-American conciliation.

A more direct contribution of the Anti-Corn Law crusade to the peaceful adjustment of the Oregon question was the realignment of British political parties it produced in the winter of 1845–46. The Conservatives, under Peel, managed to consolidate their ranks sufficiently to abolish the Corn Laws in face of embittered opposition from the Conservative party. In the cabinet crisis the Whigs had been won over to a policy of conciliation in Oregon. Free trade was the means by which belligerence over the Oregon question was turned into a policy of concession.

President Polk suspected that England had little desire to fight for Oregon; and, fortified by that conviction, he played his cards skilfully and successfully. His Government renewed the American offer of the 49th parallel as the boundary to the Pacific, with the concession of a free port on the tip of Vancouver Island. When this was rejected as " inconsistent with fairness and equity and with the expectations of the British government " the proposition was specifically withdrawn; notice was given of the termination of the agreement on joint occupation; a British

suggestion of mediation was refused, and the United States embarked on preparations which seemed convincing proof of a readiness for war.

Britain, too, was taking military measures, but purely for purposes of defence. War with the United States would endanger not only Oregon, but also Canada, which would inevitably become the main object of attack, and the stakes were not worth such a major risk. The British Government decided on yet another surrender, modified only by certain limited concessions on the part of the United States. One was the acceptance of the Straits of Juan de Fuca as the final stretch of the boundary, thus leaving the whole of Vancouver Island to the British. Another was the concession of the navigation of the Columbia to the Hudson's Bay Company, together with a clause which preserved the proprietary rights of the Company and of other British subjects south of the new boundary. Although the actual definition of the channel through the Straits was to remain a matter of dispute until 1872, the signing of the Treaty on June 15, 1846, marked finis to joint occupation.[13]

The most amazing aspect of the entire settlement is that, audacious as Polk's policies seemed, and fearful as the American people were of the consequences, there was in reality so little that stood in the way of the President's accomplishing his purpose. The great fear of the Americans in Oregon, as well as the country generally, was that England would not be willing to give up any of the territory north of the Columbia River on which she had insisted for three decades. Joseph Schafer says that it is certain that Canning's attitude of 1824, which was the policy of the Government from that time on, " would infallibly have brought on a

(13) Although virtually completing the definition of the boundary between Canada and the United States, the Treaty unfortunately contained the following ambiguity, largely due to the ignorance of the geography involved on the part of the signatories. The Treaty said the boundary-line was to pass down the channel of the Straits, from the parallel of 49° to the south of Vancouver Island, and so to the open Pacific. The exact wording of the agreement was: ". . . to the middle of the channel which separates the continent from Vancouver's Island, and thence southerly to the middle of the said channel, and of Fuca's Straits, to the Pacific Ocean." Here were the seeds of future dissension, as there were two channels that would have answered the letter of the agreement.

war with the United States had not such a calamity been averted by the more temperate statesmanship of Sir Robert Peel and Lord Aberdeen."[14] Edward Everett, American Minister in London when Peel's administration began, and who remained there until the summer of 1845, expressed in a series of dispatches during that time his conviction that the British Government was disposed to a friendly settlement of the Oregon question on reasonable terms. Everett's idea of what would be reasonable is almost exactly expressed by the treaty as finally concluded. It is now known that the British Government did send a secret military expedition to Oregon under Lieutenants Warre and Vavasour, in 1845–46,

> to examine and report on all existing British posts, to ascertain and report if they be of a nature to resist any sudden attack, or whether they could be made so in a short space of time. . . .[15]

The reports of these men were such as to make the defence of the country look exceedingly difficult. The interest of both countries in their new policy of free trade, which, if persisted in, would cement their destinies, stimulated the friendly feeling of Aberdeen and Peel for the United States. It was further the well-known attitude of England at this period to be averse to colonial enterprise. It must also be remembered that between 1834 and 1846 Great Britain had trouble elsewhere, especially in Canada, which during 1837–38 was in a state of open rebellion. Doubtless this factor contributed no small share to Britain's apathy regarding further acquisitions of territory in North America. The fact that there were many more Americans in the Oregon country south of the Columbia than there were British, giving to the former a great advantage in the event of a conflagration, doubtless hastened a settlement on the basis of mutual concessions.

The Treaty is of more than passing interest. It marked the finale of a struggle which had opened in colonial times; it determined the fate of the Pacific Coast of North America; it determined the nature of the future development in the disputed

(14) Joseph Schafer, "The British Attitude towards the Oregon Question, 1815–46," in *American Historical Review*, XVI. (1910–11), p. 278.

(15) Joseph Schafer (*ed.*), "Documents relative to Warre and Vavasour's Military Reconnaissance in Oregon, 1845–46," in *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, X. (1909), p. 23.

region; and for Canada as a whole it had very important and lasting consequences.

From the beginning of British interest in North America in the 17th century, English merchants had relied upon the fur trade as an unfailing source of profits, and in the protection of that interest they had again and again brought pressure to bear on the policy of their government. They it was who had been instrumental in securing the momentous decree of 1763 which shut the gates of the hinterland upon American squatters. Defeated by the Revolution, they moved the seat of their Empire westward, and in the War of 1812, made the fur trade once more an issue. On one thing both the English and the Indians agreed —the fur-bearing animals of the wilderness must be protected from the soil-tilling pioneers of the United States. But they were banded together in a fight against fate. Though the second war for American independence culminated in a peace that promised a respite, it merely transferred to diplomacy the old battle between resolute farmers and the British fur-traders supported by Indian allies, and as the American frontier advanced, exterminating the fur-bearing animals, the clash of these contending forces was pushed onwards until it reached the Pacific Northwest. There, at the water's edge, in the Valley of the Columbia River where the British Hudson's Bay Company had its outpost, the long struggle ended. T. C. Elliott summarizes the situation when he says:—

> Thus we find that it was the prime beaver skin of the Columbia river basin in its abundance which attracted the attention of both England and America to Oregon; the symbol of the pound sterling and American dollar preceded both the flag and the cross in both discovery, and exploitation. And the purely commercial interests involved also undoubtedly occasioned the delay in the final determination of the dispute by means of the treaties of joint policy.[16]

Although in 1846 there were only eight Americans actually residing in the disputed area, and no commercial activities, the thousands of American settlers in the area immediately to the south made a positive contribution to the boundary settlement. Owing to their presence, George Simpson was led to order the removal of the Hudson's Bay Company's main depot from Fort

(16) T. C. Elliott, "The Northern Boundary of Oregon," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, XX. (1919), p. 28.

Vancouver to Victoria in 1843. Simpson, who profoundly distrusted all American settlers, entertained fears for the safety of the valuable stores concentrated at Fort Vancouver. Lord Aberdeen recognized this decision as being a tacit admission of defeat in Oregon. Such a surrender of the Columbia River was the key to peaceful settlement, and Aberdeen translated the retreat into a treaty of peace.

The Treaty which was of such importance to the Pacific Northwest was accepted with equanimity by officials of the Hudson's Bay Company, but the cry of "54° 40′ or fight" had aroused such a great surge of nationalism in the United States that Polk was roundly berated for having accepted its terms. Although he won a state thereby, his bluff had been called. Senator Benton, referring to "54° 40′ or fight," said:—

> And this is the end of the great Line! All gone—vanished—evaporated into thin air—and the peace when it was not to be found. Oh mountain that was delivered of a mouse, thy name henceforth shall be 54:40.[17]

The significance of the settlement as far as the United States was concerned was that America had now acquired a domain imperial in extent, which stretched from sea to sea. She had secured a firm foothold on the shores of the Pacific Ocean. Of even greater importance was the fact that it ushered in an era of Anglo-American peace, good-will, and free trade, which during the next fifteen years (with slight exception) operated greatly to strengthen the North and the West in the United States against the day of Southern secession and a war for the division of the Union. A third result to America that was to be of great importance in the future was Polk's restatement of the Monroe doctrine of 1823, by which Polk warned all European nations not to interfere with the coast, as well as any other part of the American continent.

The results for Canada were no less important. The judgment of those in the area was that Britain had actually conceded too much, but that the area in dispute was not worth a war. The reaction of James Douglas was typical:—

> The British government has surrendered more than strict justice required; but John Bull is generous, and was bound to be something more than just to

(17) J. W. Foster, *A Century of American Diplomacy*, New York, 1902, p. 313.

his promising son Jonathan, who will no doubt make a good use of the gift. At all events, I am glad to see the vexing question settled so quietly. The Hudson's Bay Company is fully protected in all its interests.[18]

The significance of the Treaty to Canada was that British sovereignty was definitely established over the western territory which the Dominion was later to inherit. The Oregon crisis provided an example and a warning. The dangers which might arise from the infiltration of American settlement were clearly evident, and the need for measures to prevent a similar outcome in the adjoining area was henceforth constantly before the eyes of the British and Canadian governments. The organization of Vancouver Island as a Crown Colony in 1849; the subsequent steps to extend effective authority over the mainland, the title to which the British had secured by the Treaty; and the concern over the possible fate of the Red River settlement, which played its part in the movement for Confederation, could all be traced directly to the lesson of Oregon. The loss of the disputed triangle between the Columbia River and the Straits was possibly offset by the resulting vigilance which made certain the retention of what now remained in British hands north of the 49th parallel.

ROBERT E. CAIL.

VERNON, B.C.

(18) James Douglas to George Abernethy, November 3, 1846, quoted in James Henry Brown, *Political History of Oregon*, Portland, 1892, p. 291.

ESQUIMALT DOCKYARD'S FIRST BUILDINGS.

The three frame structures built during the Crimean War at Duntze Head, on Esquimalt Harbour, by Governor Douglas in answer to Admiral Bruce's request for temporary hospital accommodation for his squadron, have, for many years, been a source of much interest to students and others. The following notes and photographs have been gathered together recently, and are now presented in completion of the story of the " Crimean huts," as they have been popularly designated.

From time to time in the pages of this *Quarterly*, and elsewhere, reference has been made to their *raison d'être*, their structure, their uses, and their final disposal,[1] but, for the sake of clarity, it has been thought helpful to reiterate briefly the story of their building and the changes through which they passed.

Upon receiving Admiral Bruce's instructions on May 7, 1855, Douglas lost no time in causing the hospital buildings to be commenced, thereby taking the first step towards the establishment of a naval base, which he had been advocating for the previous two years. By June 13 he was able to report to the Home Government:

". . . I was induced . . . to commence the erection of airy and roomy buildings in a healthy and convenient locality . . . the buildings will be habitable by the end of this month. . . ."[2]

Four months later, by which time they had been completed, he described them as follows:—

(1) J. F. Parry, *Sketch of the History of the Naval Establishment at Esquimalt*, reprinted in Victoria *Times*, February 19, 1906. F. V. Longstaff, *Esquimalt Naval Base*, Victoria, 1941, p. 20. W. K. Lamb, " Correspondence Relating to the Establishment of a Naval Base at Esquimalt, 1851–57," in *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, VI. (1942), p. 278. Donald C. Davidson, " The War Scare of 1854," in *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, V. (1941), pp. 249–251.

(2) Douglas to Grey, June 13, 1855.

> The hospital consists of three buildings, a centre and two wings, each 50 feet long by 30 feet wide, and 12 feet from floor to ceiling. The windows are large and the ventilation perfect. The centre building contains a Kitchen, operating room, dispensary, and Surgeon's apartments; the wings contain the sick wards and will accommodate 100 patients. . . .[3]

In the same communication Douglas mentions the fact that the hospital was "well adapted for the purpose intended and otherwise a valuable property which . . . may be sold, at any time for the full sum it has cost."

Admiral Bruce, who had only a very temporary building or rented premises in mind when he first wrote to Douglas, was disturbed to find that the hospital had cost nearly £1,000, and expressed the opinion that this was considerably more than the British Government would be willing to pay. Douglas had foreseen that a dispute over costs would arise, and presented his case with such logic and firmness that the Admiralty finally paid up in 1857. The same year he handed the buildings over to Captain Prevost, of H.M.S. *Satellite*, who took charge of them in the Admiralty's name. But although they thus became possessed of buildings there, it was not until June 29, 1865, that the Shore Establishment of Esquimalt was formally authorized by the Admiralty.

In the meantime the buildings had been put to good use, one becoming a storeroom, whilst the second remained a hospital. Towards the end of 1858 part of the third building was adapted as a draughting-room for the use of the officers of H.M. surveying ship *Plumper*, and in 1859 Assistant-Surgeon Samuel Campbell, who was in charge of the hospital, made his residence there.

In order to avoid repetition, and with the object of communicating all that is known about these historic buildings, the details of their service have been listed in an appendix.

Two of them, as is well known, survived until 1936 and 1939 respectively. The fate of the third building after the group ceased to be used as a hospital remained a mystery until recently, when the following letter furnished the clue that enabled the writer to solve the riddle.

---

(3) Douglas to Barclay, October 10, 1855.

New W[estminste]r. 10 Novr. 1863[4]

Sir,

I have the honor to forward herewith Plan & Elevation for converting one of the vacant Log Buildings at the Old Hospital Point Esquimalt into a moderate [modern?] residence for Admiral Commanding on this Station.

You will observe it consists of removing a few partitions, altering Windows & Doors, and adding a new portion at the end. It also provides a Kitchen, Store room, &c. I have also thought it as well to design an upper Storey for further extension of accommodation some future day.

Mr. White[5] lately discharged from the R[oyal] E[ngineers] the very intelligent N.C.O. who waited on you is now establishing himself as a Builder & Architect. He designed these adaptations and would be a suitable person to undertake the construction.

I have, &c.,
sigd. R. C. Moody
Col. Comdg.

Rear Admiral
J Kingcome
Comdr.-in-Chief
Pacific Squadron
&c., &c., &c.,

The next step in unravelling the history of building No. 3 was to discover whether Colonel Moody's suggestion was ever carried out, and, if possible, when the alterations were made.

In an album of photographs taken by Frederick Dally between the years 1867 and 1870 is one showing these three buildings side by side; the most southerly building of the three is in the process of conversion to a dwelling-house with a second story.

Another photograph album, kept by Commander H. W. Mist whilst in command of H.M.S. *Sparrowhawk* on the Esquimalt Station from 1868 to 1872, shows the dwelling complete, with dormer windows in the roof.

The evidence of these photographs, dated as they are with fair precision, would seem to indicate that although Colonel Moody's letter was written in the autumn of 1863, the alterations to the building were not effected until 1867 at the earliest. His second suggestion, namely, that building No. 3 should become a residence for the Admiral, was apparently never acted upon,

(4) Royal Engineers. *Correspondence Outward.* July–November, 1863.

(5) Corporal John C. White was the artist who painted the well-known water-colour of New Westminster's 24th of May celebration in 1865, photographic copies of which have frequently been reproduced.

for we know that Admiral Hastings, who was in command of the Esquimalt Station from 1867 until 1869, lived at "Maplebank," a house built on Hudson's Bay Company property near the Indian Reserve on the opposite side of the harbour. It is also fairly certain that Admiral Denman also lived at "Maplebank" even previous to that time, when it was known as "Dallas Bank."

The first naval storekeeper to be appointed to Esquimalt was Paymaster Sidney John Spark, R.N., who took over his duties at the Dockyard late in 1865. Research has not revealed whether he used the residence in question, but it is surmised that during the latter part of his appointment he did so.

Paymaster Spark was succeeded in 1873 by James Henry Innes. Mr. Innes, who, with his wife and seven children travelled from England to Victoria, found upon arrival that the house in which he was expected to live was not sufficiently commodious for his numerous family.[6]

Mrs. W. E. Scott, of Ganges Harbour, Saltspring Island, who is the only surviving member of the Innes family in British Columbia, has been most helpful in identifying her father's house and office in the photographs, and in relating interesting details concerning her childhood days spent at Duntze Head. Mrs. Scott relates that the family boarded with Mrs. H. B. Ella, on Fort Street, while more and necessary alterations were made to their house.

The Innes family lived in the converted "Crimean" building until 1885, when plans for a bigger and more suitable house for the Storekeeper were put into execution. These plans resulted in the building of the brick house[7] adjoining the site of the three original huts, with its front door facing north instead of west.

To obtain the necessary space for the brick house it was expedient to demolish the former dwelling-house, consequently the Storekeeper and his family were obliged to find other quarters in the interval. They occupied the house lately vacated by the Dockyard Engineer, the most northerly one of the group as shown in the accompanying photographs, and designated building No. 1.

(6) Ella C. Scott to M. Wolfenden, February 5, 1946.

(7) This house since 1936 has been the residence of the Senior Naval Officer, R.C.N., of Esquimalt station.

Owing to the fact that the correspondence between the naval authorities at Esquimalt and the Home Government was removed at the time of the withdrawal of the Imperial forces from this coast, many interesting facts concerning the Dockyard and its development by necessity remain obscure.

The photographs and the documents to which reference has been made are all to be found in the Provincial Archives.

MADGE WOLFENDEN.

VICTORIA, B.C.

APPENDIX.*

BUILDING No. 1.

This building was first used as a store and provision room for the hospital from 1856 until 1859, when it became a hospital ward. From 1862, when the hospital was transferred to Skinner Cove, it apparently was vacant. Presumably from 1871 until 1879, when another residence was built, it was used by the Chief Engineer of the Dockyard. After 1885 and until 1910 it served as a double residence for the Chief Boatswain and Carpenter of the dockyard; in 1891 it was added to. From 1910 and until 1914 the Chief Clerk of the Naval Stores Officer lived in part of it, the other part remaining vacant. During World War I. the building became the office of H.M.C.S. *Shearwater* Shore Establishment. The rear section, originally kitchens, was condemned in 1917 and torn down. The main portion of the building stood empty after the conclusion of hostilities and until 1936, when it was demolished.

BUILDING No. 2.

From 1856 until 1862 this was the Naval Hospital proper. In 1865, when Paymaster S. J. Spark was appointed Paymaster-in-Charge of Victualling Stores, it became his office and continued as the office of the Naval Storekeeper until the withdrawal of the Imperial forces in 1905. Quarters were also provided in it for the Commander-in-Chief Pacific Coast, when ashore. Alterations were effected in 1901. From 1905 onwards it was the office of the Naval Agent, and later of the Superintendent of the Dockyard. In 1913 it was in use as the general office of the Dockyard Civilian staff, and during World War I. it was enlarged to accommodate a larger staff. Though condemned in 1936 because of the ravages of dry-rot, it was not finally demolished until 1939.

BUILDING No. 3.

This building seems to have remained unused until 1858, when it was converted into a drawing office for the use of the officers of H.M.S. *Plumper*. Upon Doctor Campbell's appointment to the hospital, half of it was used by him as a residence. Between 1867 and 1870 it was converted into a two-story dwelling-house for the Naval Storekeeper. Altered in 1873 to accommodate the large family of Mr. J. H. Innes, it was demolished in 1885, to make room for the brick dwelling now designated " Dockyard House."

* Certain details not found in the above-mentioned general references were obtained from a Report contained in Commodore C. Goodrich's letter to the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia, dated January 20, 1905 (British Columbia Executive Papers 1905/8).

In this photograph all three " Crimean Huts " are to be seen. Building No. 1 on the left is the Dockyard Engineer's house. Building No. 2 in the centre is the office, while Building No. 3 on the right has been altered for a Storekeeper's residence. Date approximately 1870.

The earliest known view of the " Crimean Huts," showing Building No. 2, the Hospital proper, on the left; and Building No. 3, Doctor Campbell's residence, on the right. Building No. 1 is out of sight to the left of the picture. Date probably after 1862 when the hospital was removed to Skinner Cove.

In this photograph are to be seen, from left to right, Buildings Nos. 1 and 2 which survived until 1936 and 1939; and on the extreme right, the Storekeeper's brick house built in 1885.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION.

VICTORIA SECTION.

Foreshadowing the approaching centenary of the signing of the Oregon Boundary Treaty on June 15, 1846, Mr. Willard E. Ireland, Provincial Archivist, addressed a meeting of the section held on Tuesday, May 14, in the Provincial Library. The address, *Beyond Old Oregon: Larger Issues in the Boundary Controversy*, indicated that the issues which resulted in an amicable adjustment lay for the most part beyond the confines of the wilderness partitioned to which neither country had, in reality, a clear and unquestioned title. Economic conditions in both Great Britain and the United States pointed towards a compromise solution. While Great Britain had to bear in mind the position of her other North American colonies in formulating a policy in Oregon, the United States, on the other hand, had to consider the condition of her relations with Mexico.

Some fifty members of the section motored to Saanichton on Saturday, May 18, to join with the Saanich Pioneer Society in unveiling plaques to the memory of two great Saanich pioneers. As the late Simon Fraser Tolmie, former Premier of British Columbia, had officiated when the first log of the Pioneer Inn was placed in position it was only fitting that his long association with the Saanich district should be commemorated at that spot. On behalf of the *Vancouver Daily Province*, Mr. B. A. McKelvie presented a fine sketch in oils of the Hon. S. F. Tolmie, the work of George H. Southwell, and took the occasion to speak of the former premier's contributions as a private citizen and as a political leader. The second plaque honoured the memory of Lawrence Christopher Hagan, pioneer and for many years prominent councillor of the Municipality of Saanich. Both plaques were presented by the British Columbia Government Travel Bureau.

VANCOUVER SECTION.

The May meeting of the section, held in the Grosvenor Hotel on Tuesday, May 7, highlighted the forthcoming celebration at the Peace Arch, Blaine, in commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the signing of the Oregon Boundary Treaty. Choosing as his topic *Contemporary British Opinion on the Oregon Crisis, 1843–46*, the Provincial Archivist, Mr. Willard E. Ireland, traced by frequent references to the editorials of the London *Times* and other British journals the propaganda campaign launched in Great Britain to pave the way for a compromise solution of the troublesome boundary question. The marked contrast between public reaction to the issues in Great Britain and the United States was noted: whereas there was but one full-dress debate in the British Parliament, the American Congress frequently was used as a sounding-board for expansionist sentiment.

CENTENARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE OREGON BOUNDARY TREATY, JUNE 15, 1846.

The British Columbia Historical Association as early as August, 1943, entered into correspondence with the Oregon Historical Society and the Washington State Historical Society for the suitable commemoration of the centenary of the signing of the Oregon Boundary Treaty of June 15, 1846. Early in 1946 a special committee was set up under the chairmanship of Mr. Willard E. Ireland, comprising Miss Madge Wolfenden, Major H. Cuthbert Holmes, Mr. B. A. McKelvie, and Mr. E. G. Rowebottom, to work in conjunction with a committee of the Washington State Historical Society on the project. From this there evolved the Oregon Boundary Centennial Planning Committee, with Col. the Hon. W. C. Woodward, Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia, and the Hon. Mon. C. Wallgren, Governor of the State of Washington, acting as Honorary co-Chairmen, and Mr. Thomas A. Swayze, Tacoma, Wash., and Mr. Willard E. Ireland, Victoria, B.C., as co-Chairmen, and Chapin D. Foster, Tacoma, Wash., as Executive Secretary. A strong general committee, composed of representatives of the cities and municipalities adjacent to the boundary, was organized, and in addition the whole-hearted co-operation of the Peace Arch Association was assured.

Two main projects were undertaken: the erection of a cairn and the publication of a commemorative pamphlet. The latter was made financially possible by the British Columbia Department of Trade and Industry and the Washington Department of Conservation and Development. A 58-page brochure containing an historical account of the event, beautifully illustrated, is about to be released. The text was written by Dr. Burt Brown Barker, Portland, Ore., Professor Charles M. Gates, Seattle, Wash., and Willard E. Ireland, Victoria, B.C. A smaller 16-page digest of this brochure was prepared for release at the time of the main celebration.

A special cairn committee, under the co-Chairmanship of Col. Howard A. Hanson, Seattle, Wash., and Dr. W. N. Sage, Vancouver, B.C., recommended the Peace Arch Park near Blaine, Wash., as a suitable site for the erection of the cairn. Steps were taken to ensure that this marker would be officially recognized by the International Boundary Commission and by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, which latter body generously agreed to bear the Canadian share of the expenses involved. The cairn, 5 feet in height, is a monolithic native granite block on a concrete base. It was centred on the boundary-line approximately 100 yards east of the Peace Arch. Cut into the face on one side is the word CANADA and on the other, UNITED STATES; subsequently appropriate bronze plaques will be added.

Over 8,000 people were in attendance at the official unveiling of this cairn on Saturday, June 15. Preceding the ceremony 250 guests and dignitaries attended a luncheon tendered by the Blaine Chamber of Commerce, to which the Provincial Council of the British Columbia Historical Association and the Section Councils were invited. The band of the American Second Division, Fort Lewis, Wash., and the Depot Band of Military District No. 11, of Canada, were in attendance at the ceremony which commenced at 2 p.m., Mayor William Mott, of New Westminster, B.C., presiding. Representative

Henry M. Jackson in his capacity as Chairman of the World Maritime Labour Conference then in session in Seattle, Wash., was the first speaker and emphasized the international significance of the event celebrated. The Hon. George M. Weir, Minister of Education, was the official spokesman for the Province of British Columbia and was followed by Lieutenant-Governor Victor A. Meyers for the State of Washington. The cairn was unveiled by Dr. W. N. Sage, representing the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, and Captain A. M. Sobieralski, Seattle, Wash., representing the International Boundary Commission. This portion of the programme was released over the national network of the C.B.C. and station KJR in Seattle, Wash., with Mr. Bill Herbert of C.B.C. as commentator.

Following the unveiling an impressive parade of the colours of military and veteran organizations of both Canada and the United States passed through the Peace Arch to mass for a final salute before the speakers' stand. The ceremony was brought to a close with a pageant telling the story of the Canadian and American flags.

On Tuesday evening, June 18, the Province of British Columbia entertained some ninety guests at a banquet in the Empress Hotel, Victoria, B.C. Col. the Hon. W. C. Woodward and Mrs. Woodward were in attendance. Members of the Provincial Cabinet were present. Greetings were brought to the gathering by Miss Madge Wolfenden, President, British Columbia Historical Association; Mr. Chapin D. Foster, Secretary-Director, Washington State Historical Society; Mr. Lancaster Pollard, Superintendent, Oregon Historical Society; and Dr. W. N. Sage, Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. Guest speaker of the evening was Mr. B. A. McKelvie, who with great care sketched the story of the Oregon Treaty, paying particular attention to the influence of the much earlier Nootka Sound Convention on the later negotiation. The Hon. George M. Weir thanked the speakers for messages from historical associations and Mr. McKelvie for his informative address.

This historic anniversary was also the occasion of fitting celebrations elsewhere along the border. From all sections of the Okanagan valley people assembled on Sunday, June 16, on the boundary between Osoyoos, B.C., and Oroville, Wash. Decorated cars and floats, veteran organizations, school bands, and Indians in full regalia added to the colour of the occasion, which marked the unveiling of a monument by Dr. R. R. Laird, M.L.A. for Similkameen, and Mr. J. V. Rogers, Mayor of Wenatchee, Wash. The international significance of the celebration was stressed in addresses by Mrs. Zella McGregor, Penticton, B.C., Past President of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, and Mrs. Frances Spanger, Cashmere, Wash., President of the American Legion Auxiliary. Captain H. A. Davis, Okanogan, Wash., and Mrs. R. B. White, Penticton, B.C., dealt with the historic backgrounds of the treaty and of the Okanagan valley in particular. An impressive feature was the Indian ceremony contributed by members of the Colville Agency in Washington and the Inkameep Reserve in British Columbia. The proceedings were brought to a close by the exchange of flags by the Canadian and American Legions.

Still farther eastward a ceremony was held at the international boundary between Carson, B.C., and Danville, Wash., on Sunday, June 16. Commemorative addresses were delivered by Mr. John T. Raftis, Colville, Wash., and Mr. D. C. Manly, Mayor of Grand Forks, B.C. Flags were exchanged by the respective branches of the Canadian and American Legions and a unique feature concluding the ceremony was a pledge of friendship made by the massed citizens of both countries, over 1,000 being in attendance.

ADDRESS OF THE HONOURABLE GEORGE M. WEIR, PEACE ARCH PARK, JULY 15, 1946.

" One hundred years ago to-day there was signed in Washington, D.C., a treaty between the Governments of Great Britain and the United States of America. Popularly known as the ' Oregon Treaty,' it divided the Oregon Territory, which, since 1818, had been open to joint occupation by both countries, by laying down the forty-ninth parallel as the land boundary between British and American possessions from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean.

" Oregon Territory was then largely a vast, uninhabited wilderness, valued primarily as a fur preserve by the enterprising traders of both countries. Thanks to the organizing genius of the Hudson's Bay Company, British interests were for many years predominant. Time, however, was working on the side of the United States. A tide of settlement was sweeping across the great American plains which found no parallel in the adjacent British territory. Eventually it reached the shores of the Pacific Ocean and became a deciding factor in solving the question of disputed national sovereignty. Nor must it be forgotten that for both Great Britain and the United States there were larger national issues involved, more significant, perhaps, than the mere possession of the thousands of square miles which eventually comprised the States of Washington, Oregon, Montana, and Idaho, and the Province of British Columbia.

" It is our privilege to-day to honour the memory of those pioneers who, with enormous courage and fortitude, carved their homes from a wilderness. Cairns and arches are but tangible expressions of our gratitude. The ultimate tribute must be our assurance that the edifice we erect shall be worthy of the foundations they pioneered.

" There is, however, an even greater significance to the event we commemorate. It brought to a close a period of protracted negotiations that from time to time promised to become fruitful of increasing controversy and tension. The respective claims of Great Britain and the United States to the territory were often ably, though vigorously, expounded. Despite the fact that Oregon Territory was remote, that its great natural resources were practically unknown and unexploited, for a time public sentiment became so inflamed that recourse to war was frequently referred to as a possible, if not probable, means of settling the dispute. Yet in the end an amicable adjustment was reached. In both countries the real strength of public opinion was arrayed against a belligerent policy. This treaty was

founded on a basis of neighbourliness, and laid the foundation for future Canadian-American relations in this westernmost part of the continent that has been preserved from that day to this.

"For Canada this treaty has a particular significance. Its provisions made geographically possible the eventual creation of a Dominion of Canada stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It was basically an agreement that provided that the peoples of both the United States and Canada should share in the economic resources of the Pacific Northwest; that both should have their ports, their railroads, their industry and their commerce; that both should pursue their national destiny in a spirit of harmony and co-operation unimpeded by border hostilities.

"Admittedly the relations of Canada and the United States since that day have many times been troubled, but they have never been strained beyond the point of peaceful adjustment. Our joint problems have all been faced and solved in the light of a realism that springs from the knowledge that whilst we are two people, we are of one family.

"We are proud that for one hundred years ours has been an unviolated frontier. But international good-will is not a will o' the wisp nor a whim of fortune. It is a spirit in the mind of man, the possession of which demands his noblest and most strenuous efforts. The unity of purpose which has characterized the efforts of our two nations as allies in the common task of preserving liberty and freedom in the world must be perpetuated. It is not, therefore, in a spirit of idle boasting that we would commemorate a century of peace. Rather it is our ardent hope that the practicability of international good-will here demonstrated may flourish and gain universal acceptance.

"The Province of British Columbia is happy to join with the adjacent States of the American Union in commemorating this historic event. We can only view with deep satisfaction this proof that understanding, good-will, and peace between nations is not an idle dream. We may look forward to the future with confidence if we sincerely and earnestly endeavour to perpetuate the spirit which has characterized the past one hundred years. Let us hope that this ceremony to-day will be a symbol of the new links of friendship which Canada will forge with our Neighbour to the South."

BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION ESSAY COMPETITION.

As part of the Oregon Boundary Treaty Centenary programme the British Columbia Historical Association sponsored an essay competition open to the students of the University of British Columbia, Victoria College, and the Canadian Naval College, Royal Roads. Three prizes of $25, $15, and $10 respectively were offered. Each institution was asked to submit the three most outstanding essays for final adjudication by a committee composed of Miss Alma Russell, former Assistant Provincial Librarian and Archivist; Mr. Harry D. Dee, of the staff of Victoria High School; and Mr. Willard E. Ireland, Provincial Archivist.

First prize was awarded to Mr. Robert E. Cail, Vernon, B.C., a student at the University of British Columbia. His essay is published in this issue of the *Quarterly*. Miss Marjorie Aldritt, Victoria, B.C., and Mr. David Charters, Vancouver, B.C., were awarded the second and third prizes respectively. The former is a student at Victoria College and the latter at the University of British Columbia. Honourable mention was given Cadet G. C. Hyatt, of the Canadian Naval College, Royal Roads, and Mr. David I. W. Braide, of Victoria College.

It is interesting to note that in addition to this essay competition a similar project was sponsored by the Delta Chapter, I.O.D.E., of Ladner, B.C., in the Senior and Junior High Schools of that district, under the direction of Miss Patricia Johnson. Evan Price was awarded the prize for the Senior High School division and Doris Hall for the Junior High School division. An essay competition amongst the school children on both sides of the boundary was also a feature of the celebration held in the Okanagan valley.

HELMCKEN HOUSE MUSEUM.

An interesting event took place at Helmcken House Museum on July 5 when Mr. Willard E. Ireland, Provincial Archivist, presented a framed picture of the historic old house to Mr. Victor A. Magnin, of Los Angeles, Cal. The presentation marked the ten thousandth visitor to register since the museum was officially opened to the public on August 26, 1941. The resident curator, Mrs. H. Webster, reported that visitors from every province of Canada and every state of the American Union have been registered.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE.

Corday Mackay, M.A., is librarian on the staff of the Lord Byng High School, Vancouver, B.C., and has written many articles on the history of the Hudson's Bay Company and British Columbia.

Robert E. Cail, of Vernon, B.C., is a veteran of three years' service with the Royal Canadian Air Force, who has recently returned to the University of British Columbia to complete his academic studies. His essay submitted in the competition sponsored by the British Columbia Historical Association was awarded first prize.

Madge Wolfenden is Assistant Archivist in the Provincial Archives and President of the British Columbia Historical Association.

Grace Lee Nute, Curator of Manuscripts of the Minnesota Historical Society, is the author of several books dealing with the voyageurs and explorers of the Middle West.

Rev. J. C. Goodfellow, a member of the Council of the British Columbia Historical Association and a former President of the Association is also editor of the Princeton *Similkameen Star*.

THE NORTHWEST BOOKSHELF.

The Journal of John Work, January to October, 1835. With an introduction and notes by Henry Drummond Dee. [Archives of British Columbia, Memoir No. X.] Pp. 98. Ill. $2.50.

Most of John Work's sixteen diaries have now been published. This is the last one in the Provincial Archives of British Columbia and next to the last one extant. The last one, May 13–26, 1851, is in the Howay Collection in the Library of the University of British Columbia.

The series of fifteen in the Provincial Archives begins at York Factory in July, 1823, and continues through Work's career as a fur-trader in the Oregon country, at Fort George, Spokane House, Fort Colvile, Fort Vancouver, in the Snake River and Flathead country, and in California. All of these are land diaries. The journal under review is primarily maritime in character. It takes Work in the brig *Lama* from the mouth of the Columbia River up along the Northwest Coast, with stops at Fort McLoughlin and Fort Simpson; and with side trips to Kaigani, Nass River, Vancouver Island, Queen Charlotte Islands, and a few other places. Finally, in September and October there is a voyage to Fort Langley in the *Lama* and thence by brig and canoe to Fort Nisqually and down the Columbia to Fort Vancouver.

It is a typical trader's record, using terms and references that without the editor's copious notes would be difficult to understand. Mainly its burden is a jeremiad against the Yankee traders on the Coast, who were able to get most of the natives' furs because the Company men could neither produce the articles wanted by the Indians nor pay such high prices as the New Englanders. Quite a little is added to the fascinating story of the "Bastonais" on the Coast by the constant references in this diary to the vessels, the captains, and the trade methods that Work encountered on his journey.

One is struck constantly by the hazardous life of both Boston and Bay men on this coast. Every few entries one meets a reference to a murder of native or white man. In comparison, a trader's life in more eastern sections of the continent, even among Sioux or Blackfoot Indians, was relatively tame. The Coast Indians must have been corrupted early by rival traders, for by 1835 they appear completely perfidious. Work relates not a little about their customs and manner of life.

Another fact is borne home to the reader of this diary by reiteration, namely, the difficulty that was experienced on the Coast in clearing land for a fort, building chimneys, and extracting a harvest from the heavy soil. The new Fort Simpson was not yet completed and the diary reveals much of its layout, architecture, and the materials used in constructing it.

The diary has been transcribed with great care—almost too meticulously in spots. I doubt the wisdom of such frequent use of [*sic*] for mere mis-

spellings as is found in the book. There is a good deal of repetition in the foot-notes, though perhaps not too much for the complete stranger to the lush growth of obscure Indian tribes, unusual fishes, and odd names of all kinds on the Northwest Coast.

The paper of the volume is beautiful, but the print is very unsatisfactory. Both text and foot-notes seem to be set in the same small type. Probably war conditions in the printing business explains this unfortunate choice. There is no index.

GRACE LEE NUTE.

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

A History of Prince George. By Rev. F. E. Runnalls. With a Foreword by Harry G. Perry. Vancouver: Wrigley Printing Company, 1946. Pp. xiv., 197. Maps and ill. $2.

Rev. F. E. Runnalls, B.A., B.D., has been minister of the United Church of Canada at Armstrong, B.C., since the beginning of July, 1946. Prior to that he was minister of the United Church at Prince George for five years. During that time he prepared an authentic and very readable account of the community and district which he served. With a foreword by Harry G. Perry, former Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, this has now been issued in book form. The history is carefully docketed and indexed, and is profusely illustrated. The frontispiece shows an air view of Prince George, taken in 1929, and the story which follows takes a wide view of the town and district from the earliest times to the present day. An appendix includes lists of mayors, aldermen, and other civic officials, together with a bibliography. There seems to be only one printer's error, and one error of fact, in the book's 200 pages: "January" is misspelled on page 171; and, on page 179, under "1926," the second alderman should be I. (Ivor) B. Guest, instead of H. B. Guest.

In Sir Mortimer Durand's *Life of the Right Hon. Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall*, we read of the hero receiving "copies of his volume of 'Asiatic Studies,' with a 'kindly but magisterial letter' from the editor of 'The Edinburgh Review,' for omitting to acknowledge in his preface that one of the chapters was taken from an 'Edinburgh' article. Lyall had asked permission, but had forgotten to mention it, and he now apologized humbly, 'pleading youth and inexperience as an author.'" Mr. Runnalls was in good company when he forgot to mention that part of his story had already appeared in the *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, and can plead the same excuse as did Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall.

The *History of Prince George* reveals the author as a careful, painstaking chronicler of local history, not lacking a sense of humour or the gift of imagination. The opening paragraph reveals the scope of his undertaking:—

Not far from the geographical centre of British Columbia there is a lovely valley where the clear waters of the Nechako River join those of the muddy Fraser. Here at the meeting of the waters is situated the young and enterprising city of Prince George. Its citizens believe that its greatness lies in the future, but there is sufficient romance in the few years of its history,

and in the many years that preceded its birth, to be worth the telling, and it is the purpose of this work to relate some of that romance.
Then follows a story worth telling, well told.

Following a chapter on geology—"Before the Age of Man"—Mr. Runnalls tells of the native Indian peoples called the Dénés; traces the story of the great explorers, Mackenzie and Fraser, and the history of the fur companies in the area. There is a chapter on "The Golden Cariboo," which includes a record of the Overlanders of 1862. The story of the Telegraph Trail, and the coming of the railways, is well told. Credit is given to the early Roman Catholic missionaries for pioneer religious work, especially amongst the Indians. The work of Protestant denominations is noted in "The Story of a Wedding" (chapter XI.), and elsewhere throughout the book.

The second half of the book is taken up with the story of Prince George itself; of the early settlers, difficulties of transportation, the struggle between rival communities, the romance of real estate, the growth of industry, and community life.

The closing chapter—"Hope Springs Eternal"—links the long story with the Second World War, and consequent developments in building and transportation. The railway-line to Prince Rupert became the "Burma Road" of Alaska, and the opening of the Alaska Highway in November, 1942, brought new visions to old settlers. "In view of these facts," concludes Mr. Runnalls, "and because Prince George is so strategically located in the Central Interior of British Columbia, the rosy hopes for the future which are entertained by its citizens are understandable."

Mr. Runnalls is to be commended for producing such a work, and it is to be hoped that others will do for other communities what he has done so well for Prince George.

JOHN GOODFELLOW.

PRINCETON, B.C.

Fur and Gold in the Kootenays. By Clara Graham. Vancouver: Wrigley Printing Company, 1945. Pp. xiii., 206. Map and ill. $3.

This interesting volume supplements in many respects the *Tales of the Kootenays*, published by Fred J. Smyth in 1938 and issued in a second edition in 1942. Mr. Smyth devoted most of his attention to the later 80's and 90's. Mrs. Graham, on the other hand, deals with earlier days, and her narrative extends from primitive times to the middle 80's and the founding of Nelson.

The book is divided into three parts. The first—"The Country and its Primitive Peoples"—consists of only a few pages, but forms a useful and informative outline, despite its brevity. Part II. is devoted to the explorers, fur-traders, and missionaries who travelled through or settled in the Kootenays in the period 1807–58. David Thompson, Sir George Simpson, and Father De Smet are the most celebrated figures dealt with, and they overshadow all others—even such notables as David Douglas and Paul Kane. The journals of these and other travellers contain striking and often dra-

matic accounts of their journeys up and down the Columbia, and elsewhere in the region, and Mrs. Graham has performed a most useful service in bringing the substance of them together. Indeed, this part of the book might well have been extended considerably, and readers would probably have welcomed more direct quotations from the original sources.

Part III. is entitled "Early Gold Mining and Other Events, 1856–1888." The topics treated include the Palliser expedition, the gold-rush to Wild Horse Creek, the building of the Dewdney Trail, Baillie-Grohman's once celebrated land reclamation scheme, and accounts of the Kootenay adventures of Moberly, Sproat, Dr. Dawson, and others. The variety of material available is remarkable, and here again it is evident that a much larger book could easily be written, even if use were made only of sources readily to hand.

There are twenty-seven illustrations, and an outline map, that appears as a frontispiece, has wisely been made simple and crystal clear. Both Mrs. Graham and her printers are to be congratulated on the attractive type and format. It may not be generally known that many books bearing the imprint of Toronto publishers are now being printed in British Columbia. In view of the quality of work done by local presses this is not surprising.

It seems ungracious to add an *errata* slip to a review, but a few errors of fact can scarcely be left unnoticed. Cook was not the first white man to see British Columbia, and Captain Vancouver arrived fourteen years, not three years, after Cook's visit (p. 20); Bishop Demers did not publish the first newspaper in British Columbia (p. 71); and Walter Moberly did not belong to the Royal Engineers (p. 150). There are several slips and omissions in the bibliography, notably in the authorship of *The Honourable Company*, which is attributed to Douglas Reid instead of to Douglas Mackay (p. 205). It will be noticed that none of these errors relates directly to Mrs. Graham's special field of interest—the Kootenay; but they cannot help but make an unfortunate impression on the historically well-informed reader.

W. KAYE LAMB.

VANCOUVER, B.C.

Maquinna the Magnificent. By B. A. McKelvie. The Vancouver Daily Province, 1946. Pp. ix., 65. Ill. [Printed for private distribution.]

In an endeavour to increase interest in the history of British Columbia the *Vancouver Daily Province* commissioned Mr. B. A. McKelvie to write this book. The object in view is to be commended and the publication is a credit alike to the public spirit of the Southam Company and to its author. Few people are more conversant with the historic lore of this Province than is Mr. McKelvie.

The average visitor to the West Coast of Vancouver Island to-day finds it difficult to realize that Nootka was once the thriving trade centre of the Pacific Northwest; that there "incidents" occurred which brought mighty European powers to the verge of war. Historical students are, perhaps, much better informed for much has been written on the maritime fur trade and the Nootka Affair. It was not the author's purpose, however, to write

another " dry and historical " account of events, but, rather, he has sought to indicate " the romance and drama that swirled around the area."

Mr. McKelvie has sensed the epic quality of the life of Maquinna, the chief of the Nootkans. Consequently his story unfolds not as a narrative of the great visitors to Nootka—British, Spanish, or American—but as a chronicle of the native peoples. All the great explorers and traders—Cook, Hanna, Strange, Meares, Haswell, Colnett, Martinez, Haro, Vancouver, and Quadra, to mention but a few—appear upon the scene and their activities are described with a fine sense of historical proportion. But, throughout, it is the reaction of Maquinna, Callicum, his friend, or Comekela, " the travelled one," to these intruders which is emphasized. Events and people thus take on a new significance: Meares becomes responsible for returning Comekela to his people rather than the builder of the *North West America;* the burning of Yuquot seems more distressing than the " Spanish Insult to the British Flag "; the murder of faithful Callicum raises more resentment against the conduct of Martinez than does his mistreatment of Colnett; Alberni becomes more human in his rôle of peace-maker. The threads of the career of Maquinna are skilfully woven into the fabric of a majestic historic tapestry—a career which reaches its zenith in the brother-in-friendship era of Quadra and Vancouver and descends into the tragic period of decline culminating in the massacre on the *Boston.*

Three excellent illustrations especially prepared by the well-known artist, George H. Southwell, greatly enhance what is altogether a remarkably well-executed publication. Some reference notes have been added and there is a list of references which in its form hardly merits the title " Bibliography." The occasional typographical error detracts slightly from the appearance of this book, but to this reviewer the most serious criticism arises from the inclusion of the introductory chapter. A discussion of anthropological questions such as the origin of the native tribes or the existence of the Kingdom of Fusang, to say nothing of the mythical " Sasquatch," seems an inappropriate introduction to the romantic story of " Maquinna the Magnificent."

WILLARD E. IRELAND.

VICTORIA, B.C.

Early Days among the Gulf Islands of British Columbia. By Margaret (Shaw) Walter. [Victoria: Diggon-Hibben, Limited, 1946.] Pp. 67.

It is nearly seventy years since Mrs. Walter first saw the Gulf Islands, for it was in 1877 that her father and mother brought their four small children to British Columbia. In contrast with the glowing accounts of the country that had reached them in Scotland, prospects seemed so grim at first that the family almost started back for the Old Country; but they decided to try their luck for a time, and it is clear that Mrs. Walter at least has never regretted the decision.

Through the years her interest in the Gulf Islands and their history has grown, and purely for her own satisfaction she clipped or jotted down facts and stories that came her way. " Now," she writes in the foreword to this

pamphlet, " in reaching fully four score years, and finding as time went on many items of local interest forgotten, and other events repeated until many errors crept in, I have felt moved to write down some of these in rambling sketches of small literary merit; but recording conditions and incidents of an earlier time such as can never happen again."

To her the future historian of the Islands will be duly grateful, for although her little book may be rambling, it contains a great deal of interest and value. Much of the material relates to Galiano and Saltspring islands; in date it ranges from the first days of settlement to relatively recent times.

W. KAYE LAMB.

VANCOUVER, B.C.

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The BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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