RETURN

To an Order of the House for a Return showing—

(*a.*) The amounts paid to J. C. Callbreath, or others, by the Provincial Government during the year 1897, on account of opening up the trail from Stickine River to Teslin Lake:

(*b.*) Copy of instructions given to Mr. Callbreath:

(*c.*) Number of men employed by him:

(*d.*) Date of starting work; the time occupied in reaching Teslin Lake and returning to Telegraph Creek, and the number of the party who returned to Telegraph Creek:

(*e.*) Any report the Government may have received on the work done.

GEO. B. MARTIN,
Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works.

Lands and Works Department,
17th May, 1898.

(*a.*) $3,864.27 paid to J. C. Callbreath and others.

(*b.*) In attached correspondence.

(*c.*) 44.

(*d.*) See annexed reports from Mr. Callbreath.

(*e.*) In attached correspondence.

VICTORIA, B. C., April 29th, 1897.

SIR,—The Government have had under consideration the subject of the route for a trail between Telegraph Creek on the Stickine River and Teslin Lake, and understand that you have travelled over the country between those two places, and that you are familiar with its topographical features from knowledge acquired during many years of residence in the vicinity, have decided to accept your offer to locate a line for a trail as indicated upon the sketch plan furnished by you.

In the event of your being successful in obtaining a really good route for a trail you are at liberty to expend a sum not to exceed $2,000 in its construction. It is understood, as expressed in your conversation with me on the subject, that you are not to receive any remuneration for your personal services in the matter, and that you will be held responsible for the judicious and economic expenditure of the funds entrusted to you, which must be accounted for by properly certified vouchers.

In connection with this trail the Government desire to ascertain if the Hootalinqua River is navigable for steamboats, and I beg you will obtain all possible reliable information on the subject and report fully on it and on the trail.

I have, etc.,
(Signed) GEO. B. MARTIN,
Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works.

John Callbreath, Esq.,
Victoria, B. C.

TELEGRAPH CREEK, July 8th, 1897.

Hon. Geo. B. Martin,
Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works,
Victoria, B. C.

SIR,—I beg to submit herewith the following report on the trail which has been constructed by your directions of April 29th last, to Teslin Lake. On my arrival at Telegraph Creek, May 22nd, I at once proceeded to explore the route viâ Level Mountain, which I had been led to believe would be much shorter and easier of construction than the route previously followed. I found, however, that the elevation was too great and that a trail would be useless until middle July or August 1st. I, then, in connection with Mr. St. Cyr, explored an entire new route running up Telegraph Creek and joining the old trail near the forks of the Taltan, making a cut off of about twenty miles. This we considered a good route passing over a country affording abundance of feed; but, as it would require considerable time and expenditure and as the old trail could be utilized for present purposes, concluded to leave it for the present and push on the trail to Teslin as that route was pretty well known, and in connection with the new route that can be opened up Telegraph Creek, will make a trail not to exceed 150 miles with few hills and running the entire distance through fine feed for stock. I accordingly started the work on May 19th and finished on June 28th. My foreman, Mr. Fred. Patching, whom I placed in charge of the work, pushed it with all possible dispatch. The amount of low swampy country we had to contend with made it impossible to make a good trail with the means at my disposal. Mr. St. Cyr, who kindly assisted me in exploring the cut-off up Telegraph Creek is, however, making an exhaustive survey of the whole country covered by the trail, and will give an estimate of the possible cost of improving the present into a first-class trail. Our mules carried loads of 350 pounds on the present trail, but had some difficulty in getting over the swampy places. Those who came back over the trail, however, report it dried out so that but little difficulty would be encountered at this time. The total amount expended so far is $1,791.53, leaving $208.47 of the appropriation still unused. This amount I would recommend to be used in cutting out the trail up Telegraph Creek and down to the Taltan where the old trail crosses it. As Mr. St. Cyr kindly volunteered to assist in this I shall await his return and be guided by his judgment. The entire distance of the cut-off will be about twenty-two miles. There will have to be two bridges of considerable cost, say $2,000, to make the trail complete, but can get along by fording at present. I refer to the trail already constructed; there will be no bridges worth considering on the cut off. Regarding the navigability of the Hootalinqua I have obtained no recent information, but all concede that it will be easily navigated with light draft steamers. The only accurate information that can be obtained on the subject will be by some competent person going down in latter part of September and remaining at the shoals during low water. Mr. A. E. Mills, who worked on the trail, goes to Victoria by same steamer as this letter and can give you information as to the trail and the country over which it passes; his residence is 75, Chambers Street, Victoria. If this trail shall be improved to a really good trail (an estimate of the cost of which I will give you after consulting Mr. St. Cyr) freight can be carried at 10 cents from Telegraph Creek.

I have, etc.,
(Signed) JOHN C. CALLBREATH.

VICTORIA, B. C., July 27th, 1897.

SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th inst., reporting on the construction of a trail between Telegraph Creek and Teslin Lake, and have much pleasure in advising you that your prompt action in the matter is heartily approved of by the Government. Your remarks respecting the cut-off between Telegraph Creek and the forks of Taltan, whereby a distance of some twenty miles of trail may be saved, and that Mr. St. Cyr is making an exhaustive survey of the whole country covered by the trail, are noted.

In order to avoid the delay which must necessarily occur before additional reports can be received from you, the Government have decided to place a further sum of $3,000 at your disposal for the purpose of improving the trail in such particulars as your knowledge may determine to be most advisable. You are therefore hereby authorised to expend that amount.

Mr. L. B. Hamlin, C.E., has been instructed by this Government to go north by the next steamer for the purpose of making an examination of the Hootalinqua River during low water, and to examine and report generally on that route to the Yukon. He will call upon you, and the Government desire me to request you to give him every assistance in your power that he may require to enable him to carry out his instructions.

Mr. Horace Davie, who hands you this letter, is Mr. Hamlin's assistant, and precedes him for the purpose of making arrangements for, or, if necessary, to build a boat at Teslin Lake. Kindly provide him with transport from Telegraph Creek to Teslin Lake.

I have, etc.,
(Signed) W. S. GORE,
Deputy Commissioner of Lands and Works.

John C. Callbreath, Esq.,
Telegraph Creek, B. C.

FORT WRANGEL, September 5th, 1897.

W. S. Gore, Esq.,
Deputy Commissioner of Lands and Works,
Victoria, B. C.

DEAR SIR,—I think it proper that I should report to your Department in relation to Teslin Trail. Unfortunately, I can only report upon what others have done, and what I have not done.

Your instructions of July 27th, as you are aware, did not reach me until my return from Victoria. Mr. Horace Davie, who was the bearer of the letter, went up the Stickine in canoe, and delivered the same to my son at Telegraph Creek, who opened the despatches and acted upon them at once by going out to Mr. St. Cyr's camp, some distance from Telegraph Creek, and advising with him as to the best route to be adopted. Mr. St. Cyr had been steadily at work since latter part of May with a force of five men and five pack-horses, making a careful survey of the different routes and passes, and he informed Mr. Frank Callbreath that it would be the 10th of present month before he could give a definite answer as to which would be the best route, but that it was certain that the route we followed in the spring would be in part, if not wholly, discarded. Mr. St. Cyr also stated that he would reduce the distance to 120 miles and avoid all the swampy ground, or nearly all. Under this information my son decided to do nothing until Mr. St. Cyr's report was given him and could be followed.

The fact that it has taken Mr. St. Cyr, with a well-equipped outfit, over three months to decide the proper route, proves there were more difficulties to be encountered in locating than were anticipated. My son, acting under my directions, has engaged Mr. Wm. Foster to take the supervision of the construction work. Mr. Foster has had charge of the Dease Lake Trail for the past three years, and is well versed in all pertaining to trail building.

An accident to my steamer delayed my arrival at Telegraph Creek some two weeks. In the meantime I had dispatched a canoe with instructions to my son to be ready to start in at once on the receipt of Mr. St. Cyr's report as to the best route. We will undoubtedly be at work in a few days. I purpose going the entire length of the trail myself, that I may be able to form some estimate of what it will cost to build a waggon road.

I will advise you of the route selected and all information connected therewith as soon as possible.

I have, etc.,
(Signed) JOHN C. CALLBREATH.

TELEGRAPH CREEK, September 30th, 1897.

Hon. Geo. B. Martin,
Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works,
Victoria, B. C.

DEAR SIR,—In my communication to your Department of September 5th, I stated that we had held up the commencement of the trail pending a report from Mr. St. Cyr as to a new route which he thought he had discovered that would shorten the distance and give a better road-bed. We did not get his report until the 22nd instant, and then to the effect that he had failed to connect the lines by which he had hoped to make the improvement in route, that the old route that we followed last June was the only practicable route. We accordingly

started in at once opening up the trail by the Telegraph cut-off explored last spring and will do all we can towards putting the old trail in good condition as soon as we connect, which will be in about five days. That part of the road, however, that needs most work is so far distant that it will not be possible to do very much to it this fall unless we have very open weather. The fall thus far has been the wettest ever experienced by the oldest resident, and as a consequence the roads are in a bad state. I start in to head of Teslin in the morning with our train to look over the route. Mr. Duchesney, of the C. P. R., accompanies me in the interest of that road. We will do all in our power to forward his enterprise.

I have, etc.,
(Signed) JOHN C. CALLBREATH.

November, 4th, 1897.

SIR,—Verbal reports have been made to the Government by various different persons to the effect that little or no work was done by you on the Telegraph Creek and Teslin Lake Trail last spring and summer, for which you have returned vouchers for expenditure approximating $2,000. As such reports are damaging alike to you and the Government who placed confidence in you, I am directed to ask you to report fully and give all details and particulars of where and how the money was expended and what there is to show for it.

I have, etc.,
(Signed) W. S. GORE,
Deputy Commissioner of Lands and Works.

John C. Callbreath, Esq., Victoria, B. C.

VICTORIA, B. C., November 6th, 1897.

W. S. Gore, Esq.,
Deputy Commissioner of Lands and Works,
Victoria, B. C.

SIR,—Your note of 4th instant was duly received. In reply, I beg herewith to submit a detailed statement of my expenditures, work performed, etc., on the Stickine-Teslin Trail during the past summer. I also beg to submit suggestions in relation to the further improvement of said trail; also of improvements that should be made on the Stickine River, in anticipation of the great amount of traffic there will undoubtedly be on that river the coming season.

I have, etc.,
(Signed) JOHN C. CALLBREATH.

VICTORIA, B. C., November 10th, 1897.

To W. S. Gore, Esq.,
Deputy Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works.

SIR,—In the fore part of May last I received instructions from your Department to open a trail from Telegraph Creek, on the Stickine River, to the head of Teslin Lake, with authority to sign vouchers in payment for the same to the amount of $2,000. In furtherance of which instructions I employed, before leaving Victoria, four men to work on trail, viz., Mills, Scott, Sinclair, and Mass, at $2.50 per day and board, wages to commence when they were set at work on the trail. These men paid their own passage to Wrangel and to Telegraph Creek. I also employed four men at Wrangel to go up on the same terms, giving them all passage on my steamer at half fare, $5 each, from Wrangel to Telegraph Creek, they providing their own subsistence until such time as I could determine where to commence work.

It being my opinion that the trail would be located over Level Mountain, leaving the old trail about eighteen miles from Telegraph Creek, I moved the whole party, which had been increased to thirteen, to Jimton, about eighteen miles from Telegraph Creek, where they were to remain until such time as the place of beginning could be determined, allowing them a day for going out and doing some necessary repairs on the trail. This was on May 25th, the whole party, except two Indian guides, not under pay and subsisting themselves. From this point I at once proceeded to inspect the contemplated line of route over Level Mountain, finding the route entirely impracticable before midsummer, which, of course, made it not available.

I then proceeded to examine a route passing up Telegraph Creek and intersecting the old Indian trail near the junction of the east and west branches of the Taltan, making a saving of about twenty miles over the old trail. This pass we found to be quite feasible, and I decided to at once commence work from the point where the two trails formed a junction, completing the trail back towards Telegraph Creek to the West Fork of the Taltan, a distance of about three miles, then coming back and pushing on for Teslin Lake, as there were a number of miners waiting to pass over the trail as soon as it should be passable for animals with their outfits. I placed Mr. Fred. Patching in charge of the party, with directions not to exceed the expenditure of $2,000, but to make the best trail he could for that sum. This he accomplished, arriving at Teslin, I think, the 28th day of June. Most of the men, being settled with and paid off, went down the lake and river to the mines; a few came back to Telegraph Creek, and were paid off at that place, but were allowed no pay for the time they were coming back. The greater part of the work performed was cutting out fallen timber, with which the route was completely blocked, grading where it was indispensable, timber cutting, a few bridges, short stretches of corduroying, brushing mudholes, etc. Soon after this work was performed a fierce fire swept over the country, blotting out much of the evidence of work that had been done, and blocking the trail in many places almost as completely as before. The trail between the West Fork of the Taltan and Telegraph Creek was still unopened, but as the old trail by way of the lava beds was available, and there was but little more than $200 of the appropriation left, I deemed it proper to report to your honourable body before proceeding further, which I did, under date of July 8th last. Your letter in answer to this and authorising a further expenditure, under date of July 27th, passed me on my way to Victoria, fore part of August, the contents of which, however, were explained to me while here. Advice from Mr. St. Cyr, who had been exploring the country since May last at the instance of the Dominion Government, intimating that the route might be entirely changed, induced me to withhold operations on the trail till October 1st, at which time I received information that I considered reliable that the route pursued last June, with the adoption of the Telegraph Creek cut-off before referred to, would be the most feasible, and I accordingly at once started the work of opening up the trail from the Town of Telegraph Creek to the West Branch of the Taltan, to which point connection had been made in June last. This work was prosecuted under the able directions of Mr. Wm. Foster, who has been engaged on the Dease Lake Trail for the past three years, and will require but little more in the spring to put it in good condition. Cold weather caused a suspension on the 24th October. Mr. Foster proceeded with a small gang of men as far as Kowkitzic, or Egnell's Post, making some much-needed repairs and building a bridge over the Shisla, or West Branch of the Takou, the old one having rotted away so as to be dangerous.

On October 2nd, I started on a tour of inspection and exploration to Teslin Lake over the trail for the purpose of ascertaining by personal observation as much as possible in relation thereto. The result of which is, that, from examinations and information obtained from the natives who have been born and raised in the country, I am of the opinion that a cut-off can be made of from 15 to 20 miles by leaving the old trail on the watershed between the Taltan and Takou and bearing to the eastward passing over the divide between the Taltan and Dudedonta, a branch of the Takou, and getting in to the great bunch grass valley lying between Level, Kowkitzic, Harts and Spruce mountains over an elevation something less than the route now followed which passes over Kowkitzic Mountain into the same valley and saving from 15 to 20 miles in distance, Also, that a route avoiding Spruce Mountain can be found by following up the Nahlin after crossing to its left bank to a point where the foot hills of Level Mountain will be struck; thence along these foot hills over a good dry road-bed to Teslin Lake. This route, however, according to my informant, will make the road somewhat longer than the present one leading over Spruce Mountain, but avoiding the great elevation and the innumerable swamps and morasses that will have to be drained and corduroyed if the road follows the present route. Both of these possible improvements should be explored the present winter so that they may be adopted by the party that may be in charge of the work in the spring. If the alterations can be advantageously adopted, that I have before mentioned, it is my opinion that $30,000 to $35,000 will finish a first-class trail; but if the trail has to be carried over Spruce Mountain a much larger sum will be required. The present trail will be available for one and possibly two trips in the spring, as the boggy stretches are moss covered which keeps the ground underneath from thawing until about middle June. Grass will be fairly good by May 1st.

There are two bridges to be built which should be constructed the coming winter. One over the West Branch of the Taltan and the other over the Nahlin, costing about $2,500, each. Fairly good timber is available near the crossing.

Another matter that I beg to submit for consideration is the necessity of some improvements being made on the Stickine to enable large stern-wheel boats to successfully navigate said river at all stages of water. One stretch about six miles above the mouth of Porcupine which gave deep water in October last will require improving. It was with much difficulty that we navigated it with the Alaskan, eighty-five feet long, and that, too, after we had done some snagging to enable us to get through; boats 130 feet long that will be required for the increased traffic next spring would be stopped until a raise of water would enable them to take other channels. The river is yearly being filled with large trees that are undermined and fall into the river in places where the channel sweeps with great force against these flats that are covered with large cottonwood or spruce trees, the roots of which form a network protecting the bank from cutting until one of them falls into the river, tearing a great gap into which the water whirls with great force bringing down other trees to form snags and washing great quantities of gravel into the river that forms bars and shoals. I would recommend that, in addition to removing snags, the trees along the banks against which the deep water channels impinge be felled inland leaving only the stumps, which, with their network of roots, forms a complete natural riprap that will prevent further encroachment of the river. Another improvement that I would recommend is the blasting of some three or four points of reef that stand up out of the water in March and early April, when the water is lowest, on what is known as Big Riffle, one mile above Glenora. These points of bedrock are always covered with water during navigation, but contribute largely in making the passing of this riffle difficult at low water. Anticipating the government might make an order for this much needed work, I have, lying at Fort Wrangel, 100 pounds of dynamite that can be sent up the river with perfect safety on dog sleighs; I also have large steel drills at Telegraph Creek, shipped up last summer, all of which will be placed at the disposal of the Government.

I have expended $1,984.04 of the $3,000 authorised in August last, for which I have presented vouchers and received payment; something more has been spent for which I will produce vouchers when advices are received from Telegraph Creek during the winter.

The great extent over which the trail work was spread, the changes wrought by fires and growth of vegetation, has in a great measure obliterated the evidences of work done on the trail in the early summer, especially when we consider the extent over which the work was performed, and would doubtless deceive the unpractised eye as to what time and labour was necessarily expended in passing over so great an extent, and the expense of transporting baggage and supplies. At the same time I am forced to the conclusion that much of the comment referred to in your note of 4th instant is prompted by jealousy and heartburnings for fancied neglect. The vouchers which I have produced are on file in your office and can be subjected to inspection by parties who worked on the trail now in the city. Charges for goods furnished and hire of pack animals can be examined into and compared with prices ruling in that country, I fancy, without disparaging my case. That I have done but little towards completing a first-class trail to Teslin Lake, I am free to admit. But that I have done all that could be done for the amount placed at my disposal and have honestly disbursed the public funds, that I have been the means of giving the route much favourable notoriety which will inure to the benefit of the whole Province, I claim, and is all the reward I ask or expect

I have, etc.,

(Signed) JOHN C. CALLBREATH.

To the Hon. W. S. Gore,
Deputy Commissioner of Lands and Works,
Victoria, B. C.

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