

shipment of goods would have to occur here to connect with the steamers now plying from this point, above the chutes, to Hudson's Hope, at the foothills of the Rocky mountains, a distance of about 650 miles.

IMPORTANCE OF THE PEACE RIVER.

The Peace river practically passes through the centre of the vast Peace river district, and in the development of this district will always play an important part, as navigation is practically without a dangerous rapid or obstacle of any kind throughout its whole course, with the exception of that one referred to at the Vermilion Chutes.

There is also another connection with the main system. By swinging to the east upon entering Lake Athabaska, navigation for a distance of 250 miles is found, practically due east by the compass, but perhaps a trifle to the northward. From the most extreme easterly point touched by navigation on this route it does not appear to be a very great distance on the map, to touch a point that will be traversed by the proposed Hudson bay railroad, and from information that the witness had from the hunters and trappers of that district, it is not a difficult country to travel in or to construct a road over.

You cannot go into Great Bear lake with steamers; Great Bear river is not navigable. Great Slave lake, however, is navigable throughout its whole length and breadth. It is practically an inland sea.

As to getting from Great Slave lake to Hudson bay, the height of land would have to be crossed to tap the Hudson bay watershed. Back in the seventeenth century the Hudson bay people sent a man up there to Hudson bay; but by missing his way at a point on a river where it widens into a large lake, and by taking the wrong branch, he missed discovering what other people have discovered since. Handbury and Fairchild, of the Tyrell party, made the trip through from Great Slave lake to Hudson bay without any great difficulty. There is no question, in Mr. Cornwall's opinion, that had the man sent out by the Hudson Bay Company discovered this route, the north country would have been exploited for fur at a much less expense by this route than by the old route by Nelson river, Lake Winnipeg, the Saskatchewan river, the Clearwater, Athabaska, the Lesser Slave river and the Peace. This is a long, tortuous and costly way to bring goods into the country as compared with the other route referred to, if it had been discovered.

As to the number of months in the year that this stretch of waterway in the Mackenzie basin is open for navigation, Mr. Cornwall stated that all of the rivers running to the north and east with their source in the Rocky mountains, namely, the Athabaska, the Peace and the Liard, 'go out' between April 20 and May 1, on the average. They are all navigable a week after they go out, but where these rivers enter lakes the navigation opens later, it being not much before the first week in June when the lake ice breaks up and disappears. Navigation is opened on an average about the middle of June.

The Mackenzie river is a tremendous stream of water, being from two to four miles in width for its whole length. It is navigable all the way except at the mouth, where it spreads into a great many branches, and like all rivers of that kind, bars occur, and they would have to be dredged, but that is a very easy matter as the bars are short and even now can be cleared with a whaleboat in a good heavy sea. You can go down the Mackenzie as late as the latter part of October, so that there would be practically five months of navigation.

Witness did not suggest the construction of canals on the Athabaska and Peace to surmount the obstacles described, but tramways. The volume of business would not warrant the expenditure on canals, but by the construction of 17 miles of trams, and a railroad to McMurray, 3,000 miles of the finest river and lake navigation in North America can be taken.