

Hon. A. B. GILLIS: Honourable senators, when I asked for information with regard to the cost of this route I was pretty well informed as to the actual amount, but I placed the question on the Order Paper so as to be in order in discussing the subject. This project looms up for discussion at almost every session, being introduced usually by those who are opposed to it. Much has, therefore, been said for or against the scheme; mostly against it. It is true that the information we have had pro and con has been more or less conflicting, but of one feature we have been certain—that for more than two hundred years the Hudson's Bay Company navigated those waters successfully, with an inferior class of boats, without experiencing any serious losses. What we have learned during the past two seasons has to a large extent shown that the difficulties in the navigating of the northern waters may be overcome without much trouble.

Last August I visited the port of Churchill and had a very interesting and instructive trip. The last town before we enter into the northern country is The Pas, an enterprising centre in Northern Manitoba with a population of about four thousand. It is an up-to-date town in every respect. Incidentally I had the pleasure of examining several gardens there on the 13th of August, and I may inform honourable gentlemen that never in my experience have I seen finer vegetable and flower gardens than I saw at that time.

The Pas may be considered the gateway to the Hudson Bay. From this point north the distance to Churchill is about 510 miles. I am sorry that my honourable friend from Calgary (Hon. Mr. Burns) is not here, because, as some of you may remember, he stated last year that the country from The Pas to Hudson Bay was of no value whatsoever. I do not know what the honourable gentleman was thinking about. On my trip I kept my eyes open, and for the first two or three hundred miles I saw a large quantity of timber of various sizes, valleys that may be brought under cultivation, and rivers and lakes teeming with fish. The road-bed itself is well ballasted, and on it are laid eighty-pound rails. The altitude of The Pas is about one thousand feet higher than that of Churchill; consequently there is more or less of a down grade, and an ordinary locomotive can handle from forty to fifty loaded cars without any difficulty between The Pas and Hudson Bay.

At a divisional point three hundred and fifty miles north of The Pas we had occasion to stop for an hour, and again at that point I had an opportunity of examining a beauti-

ful flower and vegetable garden. For two hundred miles north of that the country is, I may say, of no particular value.

When our train arrived at Churchill what first attracted my attention was the fine elevator and the steamship Pennyworth, which had docked just two hours before. Another thing which caught my eye was a beautiful church and seminary on the little hill to the east.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN: What denomination?

Hon. Mr. GILLIS: Just wait until I have finished and you will know. I asked someone there what church that was. You will remember that my honourable friend (Hon. Mr. Casgrain) stated last year that this is a God-forsaken country. What authority he had for trying to limit the omnipresence of the Almighty is more than I have ever been able to understand. I was informed that the church is a Roman Catholic church. Evidently my honourable friend is out of touch with his co-religionists; otherwise they would not have built a church and seminary in a God-forsaken country.

I travelled around the town. It is of course comparatively new. There are a few small stores, two churches besides the one I have mentioned, and two bank buildings, one of them vacant and the other occupied last season by the Bank of Montreal.

I had occasion to visit the wireless station, and, fortunately for me, the operator was a young lad whom I have known for some years. In conversation I asked him, "Are there any boats in sight?" He said, "Yes, the Nascopie is twenty miles out, the Brandon is about fifty-five miles out, and there are others coming along at various intervals for many hundreds of miles." I asked if he was in touch with those boats, and he said, "Yes, with them all," and when I inquired if they were experiencing any difficulty, he said, "No, not the slightest."

The harbour of Churchill is, I think, the most interesting feature of that port. It is a natural harbour and is numbered amongst the best harbours of the world. At its mouth it is from half to three-quarters of a mile wide; then it spreads out to a width of from two to three miles, and extends south for a distance of between four and five miles to the mouth of the river. At the mouth of the harbour the depth of water at low tide is seventy-eight feet, and in its natural state it can accommodate dozens of the largest vessels afloat without any necessity for dredging or anything of that kind.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN.