

April. Last year they began cutting the wheat at Peace river crossing on the last day in July, and the wheat was ready to cut five or six days earlier than that. As a matter of fact, Mr. Brick, the member for Peace river, in the Alberta legislature, started to cut on the last day of July, and he told Mr. Bredin that the grain was ready to cut a week earlier. Mr. Brick cultivates 300 acres of land there in wheat, oats and barley.

Stockmen west of Peace river crossing would have to feed their cattle, taking one year with another, an average of seven weeks, and east of that probably more. The snowfall is greater on the lower part than on the upper part.

West of Fort Wrigley you get right into the Rocky mountains. The spring Mr. Bredin was at Fort Wrigley, the months of March and April were the finest he ever saw. He was there just one spring and it was as pleasant weather as he ever saw in this part of Canada for those two months, while the winters were no worse than he had seen them in Manitoba. The Mackenzie river closed on November 19 that year, and there was a little snow then—and it lasted until March. Practically all the snow went off the latter part of March.

#### SETTLEMENTS.

The settlements north of Edmonton are at Lesser Slave lake, Peace river crossing, Spirit river, Grand Prairie, Wolverine point and Vermilion. Those are all more or less agricultural settlements. The Vermilion is quite a place.

#### MEANS OF COMMUNICATION.

The means of communication are trails and water routes.

At Fort Smith there are rapids sixteen miles long on the Great Slave river. If those rapids were overcome by a canal, and the chutes on the Peace river for about three miles, in all about 20 miles of canals, it would give about 3,000 miles of continuous navigation through that country.

There is a large tract of country there capable of sustaining an immense population, following agriculture, mining, fishing and lumbering. In the event of a large population being there and having a large surplus of products, the idea of the pioneers is that those products would go west; that is, if a railway is built through the Pine Pass.

Mr. Bredin was told by the secretary of the Grain Commission that was travelling around last year, that if they had an eleven-cent rate from Edmonton to the coast, the grain producers in Peace river would be in as good a position as those around Winnipeg to-day, and he claimed the Grand Trunk Pacific would be able to give that rate. This gentleman said the Grand Trunk Pacific people claimed that their grades and curves would be so favourable that they would be able to give an eleven-cent rate, and they could ship either to the Orient or England by the Pacific coast. Everybody in the Peace river district believes in the Hudson bay route. A railway from Peace river would tap that country, and if Fort Churchill is a good harbour, communication could be made from Peace river to Churchill, and that would furnish a good outlet to Europe.

In speaking of the eleven-cent rate, witness referred to a route from Edmonton to the Pacific coast. That is on wheat. He did not know whether it was on one hundred weight or a bushel, but the secretary of the commission told him that if they had an eleven-cent rate from Edmonton to the coast that they would be in just as good position to ship wheat as Winnipeg is. Wheat would then be carried from that point on the coast to the British market. If the Hudson bay route was opened, it would be very much better than that. It would be very much shorter, and a great deal of time would be saved. The people of Athabaska would be as much on the front as they are at Fort William. The witness had never heard of wheat being shipped from the prairies to the Pacific coast and to England. There is a mill in Hong Kong that can grind three million bushels of wheat a year, and they are going to double their capacity, so that they will grind six million bushels.