

*Hudson Bay Railway*

parallels—indeed, twice crosses—the Nelson river with its wonderful water-power potentialities. At the very place where the railway crosses the Nelson river, Kettle rapids, there is a possibility of developing over 1,000,000 horse-power. That northern country is perhaps richer than any other place in Canada in that respect, with possibly one or two exceptions.

Mr. GOOD: What about the development of water-power in the winter time at those places?

Mr. BIRD: I would remind the hon. gentleman that the Nelson is a mighty river; it is one of the biggest in the world, and has a very strong current. While I have not investigated the matter in detail, I believe the government reports refer to minimum flow in connection with this potential power development. I suppose that means that it is the flow all the year round.

Mr. MACLEAN (York): May I interpose an answer to the question? I was talking with Sir Adam Beck less than two weeks ago, and he tells me that it would be possible to generate over 4,000,000 horse-power on that slope to Hudson bay. That power can be used for the mining country to the north all the year round, as well as for the railway.

Mr. BIRD: I have seen the total available horse-power in the north of Manitoba estimated as over 6,000,000; I think the government report gives it at about 3,000,000. All that power is adjacent to the Hudson Bay railway and may be utilized at points where the railway crosses the river. In addition to these major resources there are minor ones, such as fur, fish, and possibly pulp, which will in a smaller way be contributing factors to the traffic that will some day maintain the Hudson Bay railway.

When we get beyond the railway we have the Hudson bay. Although the extent of the resources of the bay itself is somewhat problematical, it is the only means of access to an area in Canada comprising over 2,000,000 square miles—an area the extent of which almost baffles the imagination. I say that the Hudson Bay is the only means of access to this vast territory which everywhere shows signs of being richly mineralized. This is not imagination; it is not especially got up for the purpose of debate. To prove that, I will read my only quotation; it is from Dr. Corless, President of the Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, an utterance he made only last year. He said:

We can well afford to stand off for a few moments in order to try to estimate the probable significance to [Mr. Bird.]

mining of the enormous region surrounding Hudson bay, with an area of 2,000,000 square miles, occupying considerably over one-half the entire surface of Canada.

I will summarize by saying that Dr. Corless emphasizes the fact that not 10 per cent of this area has been investigated and that only a small proportion of that 10 per cent has been thoroughly investigated. But the result of the investigations made goes to prove that this vast area is very similar to the area in northern Ontario that has already produced such vast wealth for this country. Further on he says:

Fortunately, enough is known to make reasonably certain that the broad average formations of the less known parts will closely resemble those of the part already more fully examined. In the only parts where any detailed geological examination and prospecting have been carried out there have already been discovered fabulously rich deposits of iron, nickel, gold and silver containing many thousands of millions (billions) of dollars in gross value of these metals.

If anyone desires further information respecting the character of that country I would commend to his perusal a publication issued by the Department of the Interior in 1914, entitled *The Unexploited West*. It would make all of us better Canadians if we knew that this vast country, equal, as Dr. Corless says, to one-half the total area of Canada, and often represented on our maps by a blank, is not totally devoid of use, but is full of splendid possibilities. And the only key to that area is the Hudson Bay railway.

I would like for a moment to divert my remarks to the accumulated traditions that have gathered around this route during centuries of adventure and of trade. From the splendid old sea-dogs of Queen Bess right down to the modern Yankee whaler, there have been those who from one motive or another have been prepared to brave the obstacles of this route. In those days it was not only the play writer who was of such stuff as dreams are made of, but every bluff sea-master who went down to the sea, sometimes to do grim business, was animated with vision. It is often difficult to know which to admire most, their splendid seamanship or their visionary power. Such men as Frobisher and Davis and Hudson dreamed of Cathay and the route thither, and dreaming of it were able to accomplish things that they could not otherwise have accomplished. Those northern waters had a fascination for them; they played upon their imaginations in such a way that unconsciously they began the process by which Canada has become what it is to-day. We would not know Canada as it is now had it not been for the vision of those brave men of old. The spirit of those olden times speaks to us now;