

SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORT.

shores of the Hudson's Bay, at Fort Churchill. From Winnipeg northward to the mouth of the Red River, the country is thickly settled, the surface is level and the soil a rich dark loam. From thence through the Icelandic reserve to the White Mud or Icelandic River, the country is undulating and as a whole, densely timbered with poplar and a small proportion of spruce. The agricultural resources of this country have not been thoroughly tested, but sufficient farming has been done to demonstrate that the land is of the best quality. From the White Mud River northward there is no settlement except at points along Lake Winnipeg, where timber limits are being worked. The land along this part of the route is similar to that on the Icelandic reserve and quite as suitable for cultivation. There is abundance of timber in this section. The Little Saskatchewan is the first river crossing of any importance, but presents no unusual obstacle. The Big Saskatchewan crossing is of more importance, but nature has done much to favor the construction of a bridge at the Grand Rapids, as the banks are high and steep and composed of solid limestone, furnishing good material for the necessary piers and abutments, while the stream is narrowed by the presence of two island in the channel. The crossing of this river will be an important point, as the intersection of the water transport of the Saskatchewan with the line of railway. It may eventually be considered advisable to run a short branch line from a point a few miles north of the crossing to the head of Cedar Lake where boats are frequently wind-bound. From the Sebatochewan Rapids to Was-ka-owa-ka Lake, is the only rocky portion of the route. This section will require much more minute exploration than I was able to give it, before final location can be decided upon. The number of rivers to be crossed is greater than on the southern portion of the route, averaging one crossing to about every ten miles. The streams are, however, very small, the largest being the Burntwood River. This river forms the outlet for a chain of Lakes lying parallel to the Nelson River and a few miles to the westward of that stream. After crossing this river we strike across the height of land between the Nelson and Churchill Rivers, which can be surmounted by a grade of one foot in a hundred. The soil over this section is lighter than the southern. The water powers along the Nelson River and its tributaries are very numerous and unlimited in extent. From Was-ka-owa-ka Lake to Hudson's Bay, the cost of construction will probably be not more than on the southern end of the route. The soil for the first hundred miles is clay over gravel, and the surface is pretty level; the balance is a level mossy plain. The rivers to be crossed average about one to every twelve miles, most of them small. The lengths of the different divisions I estimate as follows: