

Hudson's Bay Company, having been built to accommodate their own trade in sending supplies to, and receiving furs from, their posts along the Saskatchewan and as far north as the Mackenzie River. They are sufficient to take care of all the general trade that will arise at present, and can be increased as the necessity arises. The cost of transport, both for passengers and freight, by using these boats, can be largely reduced, compared with carting by land. The "Colville" is the name of the steamer running from the lower fort on the Red River to the mouth of the Saskatchewan. She is a very strongly built wooden screw steamer, and does her work remarkably well. She runs about ten miles an hour in smooth water. The depth of water on the bar has fixed her size. When fully loaded she draws seven and a half feet of water, and has to have part of her cargo taken out in a schooner, and loaded after she has passed the bar. The dredging of the sand bar for about a hundred by forty yards would enable her to cross fully loaded, and also permit of a larger vessel being constructed when the necessity for it arises. The absence of any lights prevents the steamer crossing the bar, except during daylight. She takes from thirty-one to thirty-four hours to run the distance. From Grand Rapids the steamer Northcote runs up to Carlton. She is a stern-wheel steamer of the ordinary Mississippi style, built of wood. She will be able to accommodate twenty-five to thirty cabin passengers. She can make the round trip, up and down, in fourteen days, if the improvements suggested are carried out, and can then fully accommodate all the trade for some time to come. Her capacity for freight can be largely increased by the use of barges which she can tow.

From Carlton to Edmonton the line is completed by the steamer "Lily." She is also stern-wheeled, and was built in England of steel and was sent out. An iron or steel boat is not suitable for a shallow river with rocky falls and boulders, and it is proposed to build a new wooden hull for her present engines, which are good and powerful. She will carry all the freight and passengers required. Both these vessels are provided with large derricks, placed in the bow, and which, worked by the engines, haul them across the sand bars which are met with in the upper portions of the river.

When it is stated that, to cart freight from Winnipeg to Edmonton takes from fifty to seventy days, according to weather and the state of the roads, and costs ten cents a

pound, the necessity of improving the navigation between these points becomes of enormous importance to the development of the country. The steamers, when the obstructions specified have been removed, will do the work easily in twenty days up and ten days down, and at about one-half the cost. The saving of time and cost to passengers will be equally important.

All the improvements named will be equally valuable after the railway reaches the crossing of the river. The boats will then run to and from the places where the bridges are located, and will still more rapidly and cheaply accommodate the country. The importance to the development and growth of the country of putting these works of improvement in hand without delay cannot be over-estimated.

LETTER XX.

THE TRIP THROUGH LAKE WINNIPEG—DETENTIONS BY STORMS—RED RIVER—SELKIRK AND THE RAILWAY BRIDGE—THE SETTLEMENT BELT AND THE HAY PRIVILEGE.

WINNIPEG, 15th September, 1879.

Our anticipations of getting here at the latest by Sunday, have not been realized. We left Grand Rapids on Saturday morning at four o'clock, and had a delightful sail to Swampy Islands, where the channel becomes more difficult owing to shoals. As it had clouded over and promised to be a dark night, the steamer was anchored at about ten o'clock, for the night. Soon the wind rose, a strong southeaster, and the ship swinging round at times in the trough of the waves, rolled most vigorously, pitching things about without the slightest regard to consequences. It was a miserable night and not many on board enjoyed any sleep. Yesterday morning the wind continued—Winnipeg showed us what it could do in the way of waves, and the Colville pitched and rolled with a steadiness that would have done credit to an ocean steamer in a high sea. The wind continued all day, increasing in violence, as evening approached, and the captain resolved again to anchor, taking advantage of a delightful bay, known as George's Bay, which is completely sheltered from the wind, for that purpose. On the shores were