

greatest of success. Another matter that is very instructive is the experiences of different steamers in the same season and at the same time. These experiences which are in documentary form can be examined and are very instructive. For instance at one time the *Acadia* was hopelessly stuck in the ice between Mansell island and Coats island, and yet practically at the same time the *Bona-venture* found a passage five miles wide at the same place. In the eastern end of the straits Captain Anderson—I think it was in 1914—was badly stuck in the ice, and at exactly the same time there was a fleet of five ships, including the *Sheba* which is an ordinary unprotected tramp steamer, went through unscathed. So that you see these incidents prove that with every season of navigation something new is learned, and the conviction that comes to one is that continued investigation with its accumulated experience, and with the advantage of modern methods, the navigation of those straits will be increasingly safe and practicable.

Perhaps I may be allowed to refer to the Senate report of three years ago. Now I will admit the weakness of that report from an argumentative point of view. It has its limitations. That has to be conceded, but I think it was an honest attempt to co-ordinate all existing evidence on material points. One of the things I might refer to briefly is the fact that it confirms unequivocally the opinion that has prevailed for over a generation that the straits are navigable for at least four months of the year, and the only point on which it is inconclusive is that respecting the comparative merits of the two ports. I want to interject a word here to show this much disputed question of the comparative merits of the two ports is not such that it need retard the completion of the Hudson bay route. The choice that exists between them is not very important. Take, for instance, the initial cost. There are some figures in existence that were given by the present hon. Minister of Defence (Mr. Graham), I think in 1909 or 1910, showing the comparative estimates for these two ports. The estimate for Churchill was over \$4,000,000 more than the estimate for Nelson; that is, for the initial expenditure. Then with regard to operation, does it not seem reasonable that the additional mileage that would be required at Churchill would cost at least as much as the dredging that would be necessary from year to year at Port Nelson?

As to the question of terminals, we have been told on official authority that development at Churchill on a small experimental

scale would be no more favourable than at Nelson, and at Port Nelson, development on a big scale would be distinctly favourable. I would not have hon. members forget also that \$6,000,000 had been spent on Nelson harbour, that the railway had been headed in that direction and is nearly completed to Nelson. As to navigation of these ports, I may say that it is a delicate matter for a layman to deal with. One does not even begin to understand the technical words used, but I think it is self evident that, from the point of view of natural accessibility, Churchill has the advantage. Nature meant it for a port. But then the difficulties that are associated with Nelson are not insuperable, and by no means formidable. Before any survey was made it was not difficult for a skilled mariner to approach the port, and an accurate survey exists to-day. It has been properly charted, and with the addition of the necessary buoys and beacons, and perhaps radial stations, the accessibility of Nelson will be beyond the shadow of a doubt. Without expressing any personal bias in either direction, I simply want to point out that the choice between these two ports is not such that it need retard the completion of the Hudson Bay railway.

I would like to say a word as to the desirability and urgency of this route. I do not know whether I should detain the House by giving some idea as to the enormous natural wealth that exists in the country bordering on the Hudson Bay railway, but in a brief way, without giving many figures, or reading many quotations, I think I can convey to the House some idea as to the natural wealth that does exist there, which certainly some day will be a contributing factor to any railway that runs into that region. Taking the country that is already traversed by the Hudson Bay railway, beginning at Mile 82, we find that wonderful country called The Pas mineral belt. It commences a few miles west of Mile 82 and stretches to the Saskatchewan border. In that district there have been invested in the last few years over \$2,000,000. At one period during the war \$2,000,000 worth of copper was taken out of one mine under most difficult conditions. The area called The Pas mineral belt is rich not only in copper but in gold, and has big promise for the future.

Then, if you proceed to Mile 130, you enter that large area—I think it is 10,000 square miles—of valuable agricultural land—good clay land that is capable of producing and ripening wheat. That alone is a consideration that ought to have influence. Then, proceeding from that valuable agricultural area toward the bay, the railway actually