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ROUTE BY HUDSON'S BAY IMPERATIVE

Of the many problems to be met in the marketing of grain the transportation problem seems to be one of the most important. Each year of a bountiful harvest sees a blockade, a drop in prices, a loss to the producer, and often an impossibility to realize on grain in any form, leaving the producer hampered and pressed on all sides. In fact, in the crop year of 1906 cars ordered on Oct. 20th were not spotted until Feb. 18th and when loaded were not got to the terminal until April, at least the returns were not in the farmers' hands until that time. During all that time the Western farmer was being pushed and threatened, while he had no redress or means of retaliating. In 1905 the C.P.R. ran all available cars and motive power west of the lakes and gave a fairly good service there, but this only showed the weak point of the system. The Soo canal proved quite inadequate to meet the demands, the buyers at once dropped prices to winter storage basis, which meant much the same as blockade as far as prices were concerned. By many it is contended that the opening of the C.N. and G.T.P. will offset much of the difficulty. But when we realize that the C.P.R. can only in very favorable winter weather haul to the railroad 500,000 bushels a month, only a very little relief can come from that direction. The Georgian Bay Canal system, another pet scheme, has a flaw, for if one railway can block a canal system with but one lock, what will the effect of two roads going through what is claimed to be a much richer wheat country be on a canal system of several locks. Under the existing conditions it takes an average of 18 cents per bushel to place wheat at tide-water at Montreal, half of this being freight from Fort William to the seaboard. From the centre of the Western wheat belt the distance to Fort William and Fort Churchill on Hudson's Bay are alike, therefore wheat could be placed at tidewater at Fort Churchill at 9 cents per bushel, or on the export wheat of 1906 a saving of \$6,750,000. The cost of road, terminals and surveying of Bay and Straits, as lately brought down by Mr. Sifton, M.P. of Brandon, could be saved in the difference of transportation in a

very little over four years. This saving of 9 cents per bushel would mean a straight raise of that sum to the producer, as we are supposed to sell at the world's market, less transportation. Regarding the navigation of Hudson's Bay and Straits there seems to be great diversity of opinion, some going so far as to say that only the months of July, August, September and October are available, but for many years the whaling fleet has touched Cape Farewell for their fresh water supply in the early part of May and at once proceeded to the mouth of Hudson Straits and started to prosecute their calling. The Monetary Times of February, 1906, contained several articles by business men of Toronto (members of the Board of Trade), claiming that fishing could be carried on all year round in the Bay and Straits. They contended that the trouble lay at the mouth of the Straits, but the fact of the whaling fleet operating there in May and June, which they claimed were the worst months, completely offset that contention. Fort Churchill is considered one of the finest natural harbors in the world, and all records by Hudson Bay Company employees show that ice does not form in the harbor. Mr. Thebaudeau, C.E., made extensive soundings last fall. He reported very favorably regarding the dockage, with good natural accommodation for wharfs, elevators, etc. The average rise of tide he gives at twelve feet. Now if there is a rise and fall of twelve feet each twelve hours in an ocean with a coast line of over 5,000 miles, the waters of which are forced through a few narrow channels, the chances for ice must be small indeed if the lowest temperature reached by Mr. E. Mosher, who spent from 2nd of September till the 7th of January at Fort Churchill superintending the construction of buildings for the R.N.M. Police. He also says he would just as soon be at Churchill as Halifax as far as climate is concerned. By all who have given the Hudson Bay route any consideration it is claimed to be the natural outlet for the three prairie provinces, and our only rival in the production of hard wheat (Russia) ships her hardest wheat at Archangel, four hundred miles further north than the most northerly point touched in the navigation of Hudson Bay, and that wheat has to pass well within the Arctic Circle in rounding Cape North. This is accomplished all through the month of December and no one seems to consider it anything out of common. The cry of every Western grain grower is for the Hudson Bay route, and let that cry be very emphatic, for with the crop prospects of to-day we are face to face with the greatest grain blockade on record.

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