

son, the saving in freight alone, \$6 a head, or in round figures \$650,000, would be equal to about 20 per cent of the selling price.

That has reference to the saving in freight charges alone; and it is said by experienced cattlemen that to these you can add \$2 a head for the saving of shrinkage in the cattle from making the rail journey so much shorter.

We now come to the question of the land through which this railway will have to pass. In my speech of last session I went into this subject more fully than I propose to do to-day, because the character of the land is not something that has now to be proved, but is generally accepted. We have had expert evidence given on this subject before different committees of the House during this session and last session, and I think that not only to hon. members of this House but to the whole country it is no longer a debatable question whether or not the country through which it is proposed to build this railway is of such a nature that the railway is feasible. It is recognized to be a country through which the building of a railway would not be difficult. A great deal of the country is of limestone formation, which is the ideal kind of land upon which to lay rails. There is sufficient timber to furnish ties in abundance. And there are resources which would bring a great deal of profitable traffic to the railway. Besides the short distance over which a railway has to be constructed, 470 miles, surely justifies me in saying that the construction is from every point of view, feasible, and one which would bring such profit to the farmers of the Northwest Territories that there can be no excuse for delaying the work any longer.

I beg to refer to a document published by the Senate entitled 'Our Fertile North Lands.' On page 89 you will find particulars regarding the nature of the country. I have had the pleasure of discussing this question with different engineers who have been over that territory, and they tell me—especially Mr. Thibaudeau, an engineer who has recently been out there—that in every way it is an ideal country for railway building. There are great stretches in it of first-class agricultural land. For an extent of 200 miles north and south and an indefinite distance east and west there are great resources which would yield profitable traffic. There are timber, mineral and agricultural lands, and when we get to the bay itself we find good fisheries such as cod, salmon and lake trout. As regards Fort Churchill, it is one of the best natural harbours in the world. It is deep, well sheltered, easily kept open during nine months of the year, and there would be very little cost in fitting it up beyond the building of elevators and wharfs. On pages 45 and 46 of this book to which I have referred, I find that the writer, Mr. McKenna, quoting from Mr. Thibaudeau,

thus describes some of the advantages of Fort Churchill harbour:

It can be kept open all the year by the employment of ice-breakers. Last year, 1906, the harbour closed between December 5 and December 10. The conditions in January, 1907, were as follows: In the bay at Fort Churchill the ice was 11 inches thick. It extended for a third of a mile from the shore into the bay. Ice was much thinner in the bay than in the harbour. There was some floating ice about a quarter of a mile from the edge of the bay ice. This is sent in by a northerly wind; should the prevailing winds blow from any other direction, there would be no floating ice. Beyond this floating ice there was clear open water straight away into the bay and beyond. This was the general condition up to and including January 2, 1907. An ice-breaker similar to either the north or south now in use between Quebec and Levis would, by making two trips a week, keep the harbour open the year round.

The entrance to the harbour is about 2,000 feet wide, with a minimum depth of water of ten fathoms. Vessels drawing 36 feet draft could enter the harbour and anchor within 200 yards of the west division, to a point 3,500 feet south of Fort Prince of Wales. The bay outside the harbour also affords good anchorage; there is ample depth of water.

A vessel drawing 24 feet of water can come within 150 yards of the east side of the harbour, from its mouth to a point 150 yards south of Battery beacon. There is also good anchorage south of the point east alluded to (150 yards south of Battery beacon) for 2,000 feet by 800 feet in width for vessels drawing 24 feet of water. Opposite Battery beacon for a distance of 2,500 feet across the harbour there is a minimum depth of 24 feet of water.

He then goes on to speak of other places in and outside the harbour where there is splendid anchorage. The great question, of course, occurs to us at this point, and that is the navigability of the straits. This is also dealt with in the treatise to which I have referred. I shall not take up time by going into the details, but there seems to be no doubt that the straits are safely navigable at least four months in the year. A great many of the old Hudson bay navigators put a much longer period of time during which the straits are open to shipping. We have data on this subject dating back about one hundred and fifty years, for ships have gone into the bay as many and even more years back. And when we reflect that in this present age we have our ice-breakers, our modern steamships which can break the ice themselves, and with the aids to navigation such as telegraph stations, lighthouses and other facilities, there does not seem the slightest doubt that the Hudson bay straits could easily be open for shipping at least four months in the year. My own opinion is that they may be kept open much longer.

So far I have discussed the question from the view point of the west. Let me point out that it would also be profitable for the eastern provinces. In the territories, in the next fifteen or twenty or a hundred years,