

THE HUDSON BAY ROUTE

THE congested state of the grain traffic in Western Canada during the autumns of the last half-dozen years has led to a general demand for more outlets for Canadian wheat. The building of the Canadian Northern Railway has not met the demand, and it is felt by many that the completion of the Grand Trunk Pacific will not solve the difficulty. Consequently the West, from Edmonton to Winnipeg, is looking to the North for a new and nearer outlet to the Atlantic Ocean. The demand for a railway to the Hudson Bay is heard on every political platform of the three grain-growing Provinces, and the question came up for serious discussion at the last session of the Dominion Parliament. The Minister of the Interior, in the name of the Government, spoke in favour of the idea, but refrained from giving any definite plan, or promise of immediate action. During the debate which took place both in the Senate and in the House of Commons, the possibilities of such a road were dealt with and thoroughly discussed. It is these possibilities that I propose to examine in this paper.

The question is a complex one and for the purpose of clearness must be discussed under a series of topics, which, though widely different in themselves, all bear in a vital and unmistakeable manner on the problem. The time of the navigability of the water route to the proposed eastern terminus of the Hudson Bay Railway, including opinions on the ice-movements and the climatic conditions that prevail in the Hudson Bay and Strait, is of fundamental importance. The possible extent of the operations of the railway,—the question whether they will extend their influence to British Columbia, and even to Japan and China, or whether