

The Hudson Bay Route

THE STORY OF A DREAM AND ITS POSSIBLE REALISATION.



NE of the most important decisions reached by the Dominion Government in 1908 relates to the building of a railway from Lake Winnipeg to Hudson Bay. For thirty years such a railway has been a dream of the westerner. More than one charter has been granted, and more than one railway has been commenced. The Governments of Great Britain and Manitoba have all taken a considerable interest in the project and numerous investigations have been made.

There have been two chief points in the controversy which has been going on for a generation. The first was the possibility of a railway to Hudson Bay, and the second was the possibility of carrying goods from Hudson Bay to Liverpool via Hudson Strait. The opening up of the northwest and the discovery that wheat could be grown several hundred miles farther north than any one anticipated, combined with the gradual accumulating knowledge that the northern part of Canada contained considerable mineral wealth, has convinced people that the building of such a railway is possible and advisable. The question of navigation remains a disputed point. It is quite true that Hudson Bay never freezes and it is just possible that Hudson Strait is seldom or never entirely frozen over. Nevertheless, this argument is not conclusive, for the simple reason that all these northern waters are made dubious by reason of the large fields of floating ice which continually present themselves. The rotation of the earth from west to east causes the ice fields and icebergs coming down from the north to float in through Hudson Strait.

In 1888 a select committee of the House of Commons inquired into the question of navigation of Hudson Bay and submitted a report. This stated that Hudson Bay is a vast sheet of water measuring 1,300 miles in length with an average width of about 600 miles. The average depth was placed at 70 fathoms and it was stated that there were no rocks nor dangerous reefs to impede navigation. The temperature of the water of Hudson Bay in summer is some 14 degrees higher than that of the water of Lake Superior. The report on Hudson Strait stated that it is 45 miles wide between Resolution Island and Button Island on the north coast of Labrador with a rapid current and a tide rising from 30 to 40 feet. "Were it not for the presence of the Polar ice which comes down from the Arctic seas by way of Fox's Strait during the months of April, May, June and July, Hudson's Strait would be exceptionally safe, owing to the uniform great depth of water and the entire absence of reefs or dangerous islands."

The committee compiled a comparative table of distances as follows:

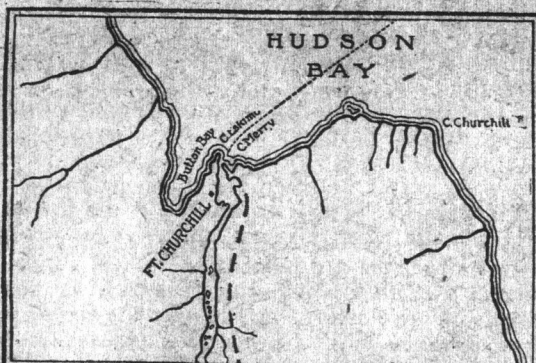
Liverpool to Fort Churchill.....	Miles.
Fort Churchill to Calgary.....	2,296
Calgary to Vancouver, via C. P. R.....	1,000
	642
	4,568

Liverpool to Montreal.....2,990
Montreal to Vancouver via C. P. R.....2,905

Difference in favor of Hudson Bay.....1,328

The committee further stated that navigation was possible during nearly three months in the year and that with further seafaring knowledge they could probably be prolonged some weeks. Presumably this would cover the months of July, August and September.

In 1884-85-86 the Dominion government sent an expedition to test the navigability of the Strait and Bay. In 1888 the Provincial Legislature of Manitoba appointed a select



Map showing nature of the almost land-locked harbor at Fort Churchill.

committee which dealt with the possibility of Hudson Bay navigation. In 1894 there was formed in Great Britain a company known as the "Hudson Bay and Pacific Railway and New Steamship Route" for the purpose of exploiting this possible line of travel. The promoters of this company published a rather interesting pamphlet which contained most of the information which was available at that time, and any person interested in the subject will find in it some entertaining reading.

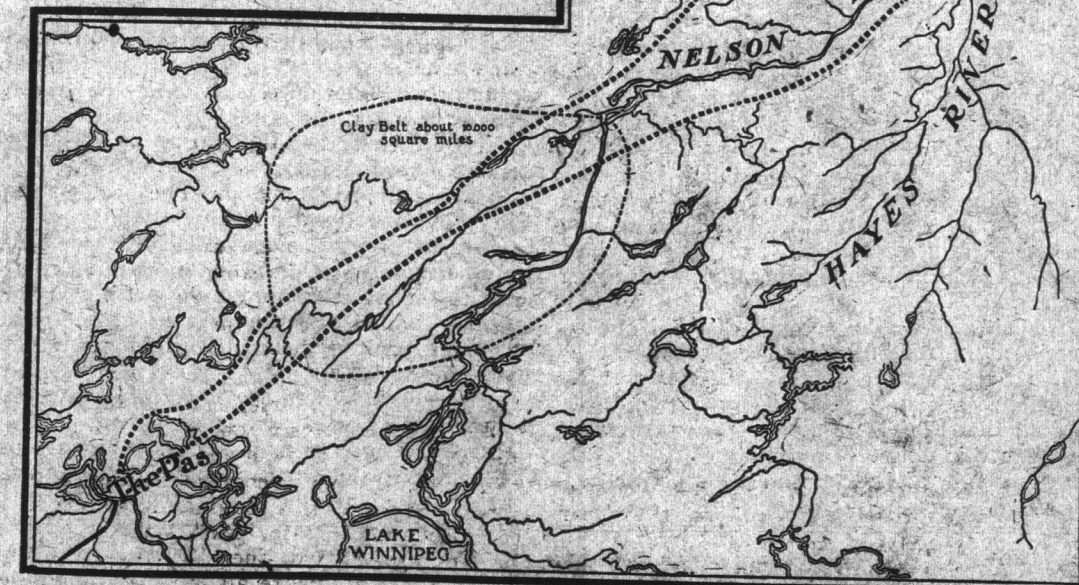
During the fourteen years that have elapsed since that time there has been more or less investigation, and much has been written and spoken as to the possibility of the route. The floating ice bogey has nearly disappeared. The Dominion government has sent two or three expeditions to the north, and several engineers have made investigations both as to the inland districts and the coast lines. During the past winter a select committee of the Dominion Senate has given further attention to the subject and has collected all the evidence available. Their report is a voluminous and extensive document. A large portion of the material has been published in a pamphlet entitled "Canada's Fertile Northland," published under the authority of the Honorable Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior. While this evidence relates to the whole of northland Canada, some of it bears directly upon the possibility of a Hudson Bay railway, the resources of the country through which it will run and the line of policy which will be pursued by the government in further development of this northern district. Among the recommendations of this committee is the following:

(2) That the construction of a railway connecting existing railways with Fort

Churchill on the Hudson Bay, would open up a large tract of land, well fitted for settlement, as well as afford an additional outlet for the products of the west, and where settlements are now being made."

Section C of this report deals especially with the navigability of Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait and contains evidence from Mr. A. P. Low, Mr. J. B. Tyrrell, Dr. Robt. Bell and Commander Wakeham. Mr. Low states that between the end of July and the end of September, when he was there, the Strait was not quite clear of floating ice, but that there was not sufficient ice during this period to harm an ordinary vessel. From the end of September snow squalls are frequent and when the temperature gets low there is considerable fog. He seems convinced however, that navigation is possible up to November 15. The presence of floating ice would depend very much upon the direction of the prevailing winds. Iron tramp steamers should find little difficulty during this period. After November 15, especially prepared steamers could navigate the Bay and Strait for a considerable period in favorable years. During at least two months of the year there was no trouble from ice at all, and the Hudson Bay route was then even a clearer one than the St. Lawrence.

Mr. Tyrrell, who has been in Churchill twice in the months of October and November



The proposed Hudson Bay Railway will have a choice of routes, to be determined by the Engineers' reports and the possibility of a harbor at the mouth of the Nelson. York Factory is at the mouth of the Hayes River, but there is no good harbor there. From The Pas, present terminus of C.N.R., to the mouth of the Nelson is 450 miles; from there to Churchill is 100 miles.

confirms Mr. Low's opinion as to the possibility of navigation and is almost more convinced as to its practicability. However, the harbor of Fort Churchill closes about November 1, and if Fort Churchill is the only good harbor on the western coast of Hudson Bay, then of course navigation will be practically useless after that harbor is closed.

Dr. Robt. Bell explains that he has been through Hudson Strait nine times. June 22 was the earliest date on which he entered the Strait. All his trips were made between June 22 and October 10. No difficulty was

ever experienced. Hudson Strait is 500 miles in length and averages 100 miles in width and there are many possible harbors on each of the shores. With proper lighting and reliable charts, navigation of the Strait should be easy. He never saw but one fog in the Strait and no blinding snow storms. He saw no reason why ships should not pass through the Strait at any time during the winter; neither the Bay nor the Strait is frozen up any more than the Atlantic ocean. Between Churchill River and Nelson River the land consists of a hard clay surface. Farther inland it is partly muskeg. There would be



no difficulty in building a railway through this district except on the muskeg land near Churchill.

Commander Wakeham details his experiences with the sailing vessel, Diana, which he took into Hudson Bay in 1897. They had some trouble with pack ice in the latter part of May, but if he were taking the trip again he would know how to avoid it. They made several trips in and out of the Strait and never had any further delay from ice. On September 7 they experienced their first snow storm. On October 24 he was at Cape Wolstenholme

and met no ice. In their last attempt to get into the Bay on October 29 they were stopped by heavy winds and snow storms. He made four round trips altogether, two of them into Hudson Bay and one of them as far as Churchill. He is convinced that when the Strait is properly surveyed and lighted navigation will be safe, but thinks it will end about November 1.

As to the navigability of Hudson Bay and Strait all authorities agree that it is possible until November 1. There are, however, those who believe that it is possible all winter, in spite of the cold and the snow storms. To take advantage of it after November 1, some other port than the landlocked harbor at Churchill would be necessary. A gentleman who has given much attention to the subject for thirty years declares that the port should be at the mouth of the Nelson River, where the tide prevents the ice from forming. The Nelson has a very wide mouth and the tide rises ten to sixteen feet as far up as Sale Island. A port here would be expensive of construction but would be accessible practically all winter. If this theory and these facts are correct, navigation on this route would be possible till perhaps February 1. November, December and January would be the three most valuable months for the west, for then most wheat is available for export.

As to the railway there is evidence in favor of building it along the Nelson River instead of along the Churchill. Both routes are shown on the accompanying map. The Dominion government has decided on a railway, which will run from The Pas, the present terminus of the Canadian Northern Railway, to the Bay, but the question of the route is left open. Until the present year, no one discussed the advantages of the Nelson River route, but it is just within the bounds of possibility that this may yet be chosen. Much will depend on the reports of the engineers both as to the route itself and the feasibility of a harbour at York Factory or at some point along the Nelson River between Seal Island and the mouth.—Canadian Courier.

TABLET FOR TAMMANY

After six years' delay it is now hoped soon to erect a tablet over the spot where the Indian Chief Tammany is supposed to be buried in Pennsylvania. The tablet was provided in 1902 by the Historical Society of Bucks County but the man who owned the ground where the grave is situated refused to allow its erection unless the society bought the land immediately surrounding the grave. As the society had no money for the purpose it abandoned the project. Recently the site of the grave was sold and the new owner is expected to consent to the erection of the memorial.

The supposed grave of Tammany is a few miles north-east of Doylestown, the county seat of Bucks county. It is close to a spring on the banks of the Neshamity Creek in New Britain township.

Without a doubt a famous Indian was buried there about the middle of the eighteenth century. Whether or not he was the sachem known as Tammany may never be positively decided.

A Study of Present Day Slavery in Republic of Mexico



MEXICO is one of the countries which propounds in its most urgent form the problem of the emancipation of the natives, still kept by the conquering race in a condition of semi-slavery. It is on them, especially, that the burden of economic exploitation falls, riveted by a political despotism.

In 1519, when Cortes with a few hundred Spaniards began the conquest of the country, the Aztecs, the last-comers among the races assembled on the plateau of Anahuac, were at the decline of a civilization which had once been brilliant. Mexico at that time contained 60,000 houses, a large number of which were topped with towers and terraces. Wide roadways connected the streets; imposing buildings, particularly temples, rose on every side. But monarchical despotism had broken the energy of this race. Reduced to a flock of sheep, they could not resist a mere handful of invaders. Such was the ferocity of the priestly caste with their innumerable human sacrifices in honor of the gods that the system of the Inquisition constituted a progress in humanity.

The Aztecs were without difficulty converted to Christianity, naturally combining more or less with the observances of this religion those of their old religious belief. Priests and monks became the leaders, not merely in a spiritual sense, of this race. At the beginning of the War of Independence, it was the priests that led the population, now extremely mixed in blood, against the soldiers of the capital.

The domination of the clergy survived the separation from Spain. The clergy organized the struggle against the liberal rule of President Juarez, who called in the French invaders and acclaimed the short-lived Emperor Maximilian, only to upbraid him later for his lukewarmness. The victory of the Republicans, therefore, with the help of the Protestant influence of the United States, was signaled by vigorous measures, such as the separation of Church and State, the secularisation of the enormous property of the monks, intended to

make the civil power safe from clerical influence.

These measures did not destroy the influence of the secular clergy over the tractable and bigoted Indians in most of the states of the Federal Republic. Every year, these pious flocks, in spite of the law concerning public ceremonies, still carry on their shoulders at the great religious festivals, statues of saints magnificently arrayed in silk, gold and jewels, winding up these idolatrous processions with salvos of musketry and displays of fireworks.

The education of this race, intelligent notwithstanding, which has produced men such as Benito Juarez, the greatest figure in Mexico today, is almost everywhere entirely neglected. In spite of free, compulsory, and secular education, millions of Indians cannot read or write. Accordingly, they continue to be entirely at the mercy of the wealthy landowners and merchants. Never has the designation of "mamsos" (submissive), by which they are distinguished from the Indian "bravos" who are still nomad and semi-independent, been better deserved.

From this tame flock principally are the "peons" recruited.

The "peon," working chiefly for the wealthy "hacenderos," farmers and cattle-breeds, is in the full sense of the term, the modern serf. The mouljik, apparently the most miserable of the disinherited classes, discusses his rights and endeavors to argue with the noble landowner or the usurer; the Sicilian peasant, by associations sometimes open, sometimes secret, attempts to struggle against the economic burdens which crush him; the Irish peasant, hitherto looked on as a white slave, has now been raised to the level of the proletariat in the rest of Europe, on the road to economic freedom. The "peon" of the "hacienda" is still held in the hollow of his master's hand.

The "peon" is no longer a creature, he is a chattel. Attached to the soil by a thousand chains, he knows nothing of the world but the "hacienda" on which he lives and the boundaries of which are for him the limits of the universe. There is the "jacal," the corner in which he sleeps on the bare earth, with a stone

for his pillow; there is the store, at which he buys every year a few yards of stuff, with which to cover his own wretched body and that of his wife; and the "aguardiente" which with the "mezcal" or the "pulque" enables him to drown his troubles in stupefaction; there is also the church, where he will go and devoutly kneel, hoping in resignation for happiness in a future life. The only thing missing there is a school.

Nevertheless, the Mexican constitution does not recognize slavery, and the poorest peon is declared to be equal to the President of the Republic. But the reality of facts forms an ironical contrast with this theoretical equality.

The peon is chained to the soil. Paid not in coin, but in paper money current only in the stores of the "hacienda," it is substantially impossible for him to go away in search of more merciful conditions of existence.

The "hacendero" has remained a feudal baron, administering justice on his estates, in spite of codes and tribunals. He does not restrict himself to simple reprimands, fines or deductions of wages. In addition to blows, distributed liberally to the peons and even to their wives and children, there are corporal punishments still in use which recall the Middle Ages. Such are deprivation of food, the bastinado, the water-drop, the stocks, and the cart-wheel.

The water-drop does not seem to suggest anything very terrible; nevertheless it constitutes an unendurable torture. The peon who is condemned to suffer a succession of drops falling slowly one by one always on the same part of the body, ends after a certain time by fainting, the sensation becoming terrible. Therefore among the hacenderos there are found devotees of "sadism" passionately fond of this species of punishment, especially when it is inflicted on women.

The stocks consist generally of chains fastening the feet and hands, but frequently of a plain bar with double rings passing round the ankles of the prisoner, who is extended on the ground or on a plank. Sometimes, however, among the hacenderos, who pride themselves on upholding old traditions, the stocks are

actual wooden frames like those still in existence in Europe at the beginning of the eighteenth century, in which the head, feet, and hands of the erring peon are imprisoned.

The wheel is a still more serious torture, and very frequently employed. The peon is fastened to the spokes of one of the wheels of a cart drawn by a couple of mules. The wretched man revolves with the wheel, and is driven crazy with dizziness, fever and thirst. This torture often lasts an hour, and sometimes it is prolonged for a day without the tortured man being able to get a cup of water or a moment's rest. This barbarous punishment is in use principally in the State of San Luis Potosi, the governor of which is H. Espinosa y Cuevas, one of the largest hacenderos in Mexico.

It is to runaway peons that the cart-wheel, the water-drop, whipping, and the stocks are principally administered. In this country living is dearer than in the United States; and the hacienda-serfs earn only a trifling sum. Their average wages are twenty-five centavos (cents) a day. The result is that they are often in debt to the amount of several hundred pesos to their masters, who thus have an excellent excuse for detaining them in their service for ever. Peons running away from the hacienda are immediately notified to the authorities and are soon captured, for their lack of means prevents them from going far, and are treated like slaves and debtors combined.

Women share in this wretched condition; they do not escape bad treatment.

The usual food of the peon consists of "tortillas" (cakes of maize flour) and beans. Nevertheless, if an animal dies of disease, the master gives his peons the flesh, which would otherwise be wasted. It is only on such occasions that these outcasts eat meat.

Clothing is of the scantiest. Shirt and drawers of coarse canvas for the men; chemise and petticoat of the same canvas for the women. Both sexes go about barefooted.

A newspaper is unknown among the peons, because, to begin with, the great majority of them could not read or understand it; and, secondly, because the master carefully watches

to see that none make their way into the hacienda.

It may be noted that in spite of the territorial extent of this Republic, the soil belongs to a very small number of owners. There are private domains the size of a state. Generally, these domains have been formed by the dispossession of Indian communities, Yaguais, Mayas, Trahumazas, Papentecos, etc. From one day to the next, whole races have found themselves reduced to slavery within a property and dispossessed of everything by the hacenderos; have been compelled, in order not to die of hunger, to sink into the condition of peons. Sometimes those whom they wished to dispossess resisted, then they were massacred. Terrible scenes of eviction and bloodshed have occurred in the fertile Yagui district (State of Sonora), stolen in this way from its inhabitants by a few very wealthy freebooters. Many of these domains remain fallow. Moreover, those peons who can rescue themselves from serfdom make their way to the United States in search of more food and freedom. It has been calculated that through Nogales, Ciudad Juarez, Piedras Negras, and Laredo alone, more than 100,000 Mexicans reach the neighboring republic every year. As regards the total amount of emigration, sober statistics, although non-official, estimate it annually at 200,000, and the tendency is increasing.

The working artisans naturally include a smaller proportion of Indians, and their condition is less pitiable than that of the peons of the hacienda. Nevertheless, it is not brilliant. The majority work from ten to twelve hours and many even sixteen hours a day, for wages liable to very great fluctuations. The average wages are fifty to seventy-five centavos in Mexican currency, or more frequently still, in spite of the law, in tickets for the employers' stores, where everything is dearer than elsewhere and of inferior quality.

The system of deductions is rigidly enforced. Out of the workmen's wages are deducted the salary of a doctor and the stipend of a priest.—Charles Malato, in International Magazine.