

The most eastern route proposed is an extension of the Lake St. John Railway from Quebec. The distance in an air line is stated by Mr. Sullivan, Engineer and Inspector of Surveys of that Province, to be 372 miles. Allowing fifteen per cent. for curves, about 430 miles should be estimated as the actual distance. This added to the existing 191 miles would make the distance to a commercial outlet 621 miles.

The total official returns show the cost of the portion already built to have been over forty-eight thousand dollars per mile, including fifty-one miles of branch lines. For the main line up to 1895, the Dominion Government had paid a bonus of \$1,002,000, or about \$5,200 per mile; the Province of Quebec, \$2,090,500, or over \$10,900 per mile, and the City of Quebec, \$462,000, or nearly \$2,500 per mile, not counting branches. The aggregate of Government aid is therefore about \$18,600 per mile of main line. At this rate it would cost to extend the same to Hudsons Bay \$20,640,000, of which \$7,998,000 would be the proportion of Government subsidies.

The geographical direction of this route will evidently render exportation of fishery products over it unprofitable under any circumstances. Hence its usefulness as an avenue to Hudsons Bay would be of little account, and its investment qualities would remain as poor as ever. (See note).

The next western route, heretofore promoted, is that from North Bay, on the C. P. R., to Moose Factory, for which a corporation was organized, and its prospectus published in 1884, a copy of which, with map attached, is now before me.

The line as shown on said map, is 375 miles long, with the west end of Lake Abbitibi as a central point. To this should be added fifteen per cent. for curves, which would make the actual construction, distance 430 miles, and from Toronto to Moose Factory, by this route, 654 miles.

Recently another charter has been obtained for a route from Sudbury to Lake Abbitibi, and thence to Moose Factory, and a consolidation of the ownership of both interests is understood to have taken place.

The features of each are essentially the same, except that the more westerly route is reported as traversing some valuable pineries near the southern end, but this is probably more than counterbalanced by having its line projected over a very rough country where no main watercourse can be followed (see note) with many interfering lakes to cause a serious lengthening of its line, which will probably not be less than the other, and may be considerably more.

For purposes of comparison both of these routes may be considered as essentially alike, except that the Sudbury route will with present connection add seventy-nine miles to the distance via the other to Toronto.

There remains but one more projected Hudsons Bay route to be considered, namely, that from Winnipeg northward to Fort Churchill (that to York Factory near the mouth of the Nelson having been abandoned because of the impossibility of obtaining a harbor there).

This route will be about 800 miles long when constructed. For the first 300 miles it will pass between competing lake waterways, which will be cheaper

(NOTE).—The earnings of this line, as now operated, were reported to Government. (See Report of 1895) as \$164,312.97. Operating expenses \$157,737.22, leaving a net of \$6,575.75, or \$27.17 per mile for repairs, etc., etc.

(NOTE).—Vide Report of Provincial Surveyor engaged in locating the line between the districts of Algoma and Nipissing for 132 miles north of the C. P. R. during 1896.