

From Edmonton we took the Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia Railway to the end of steel, then by wagon to the Smoky River, thence down the Smoky by a rather primitive boat to the Peace River and Peace River Crossing. A word or paragraph about this railway enterprise into the Peace River country is necessary. It is well known that a good many men prominent in the railroad world had considered the prospect of building into the new North, but balked when it came to the actual carrying out of the matter. The country, they said, was a sort of unknown land and its possibilities were uncertain. It was true that a score of years ago a special Parliamentary Commission under the late Senator (afterwards Lieut.-Governor Sir John) Schultz, of Manitoba, had after many months of investigation brought in a most favorable report of the country and its capabilities. But this report did not reach many people and was in large measure non-productive of actual results. There was much land elsewhere to be possessed and the facilities for reaching it were many, so that people were not likely to go as far afield as the new North land. And a land without people was not inviting to a railroad. But Mr. J. D. McArthur, a man of Glengarry, who came years ago to Winnipeg and had with remarkable perseverance and ability won a place for himself in the railway building world, became convinced that the Peace River country should be opened up as a field for settlement. In other words, he became the leader in an immense back-to-the-land movement; and accordingly we find him gridironing the North with four different lines of railway at the present time.

Peace River Crossing is the point where the Central Canada Railway is to pass over to the north of that mighty stream, and to this point the grade is now completed. Here, as at so many other places in the North-West, that remarkable organization the Hudson's Bay Company, had a trading post and store in the long ago, and they still remain as the leading business establishment of the new centre. It has been the fashion with some uninformed people to say that the company was opposed to the settlement of the country, but I have never been able to find any satisfactory evidence for that statement. On the contrary they sold out their charter rights for a comparatively small sum, and for the most part they accommodated themselves to the changed conditions by changing with the times and adopting new methods of business. Besides that it ought to be remembered that the company with its intense loyalty to British institutions, kept the great North-West of Canada for the British Crown when it might otherwise have drifted over to the republic to the south of us. The early explorers of the great company blazed on trees and cut on rocks all over the wide North-West the letters "H. B. C." which in effect claimed the country for the flag under which they operated. I am not advocating or defending the principle of granting such a huge