

SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORT.

1. CAPT. WM. ROBINSON.

2. General Manager N. W. Navigation Co., Winnipeg.

Am General Manager of the North West Navigation Company. Have commanded a vessel on Lake Winnipeg for six years. The navigation of the Red River is interrupted at St. Andrews by boulders and shallows over a shelly rock bottom. Think this obstacle can be removed by dredging. Think the dredge at present building at St. Boniface could deepen this channel. In that case, vessels drawing ten feet of water could run to Winnipeg during the whole season. I have been told that it is the intention of the Dominion Government to use the dredge for this purpose after having deepened the channel at the mouth of the Red River and improving some of the harbors on Lake Winnipeg. Low water commences about nine miles from here and extends at intervals for about five miles; in other parts of the river the depth at low water is about 22 feet. During the spring floods we can run to Winnipeg and Emerson. Can calculate on about three months of good water. At the mouth of the Red River there is a sand bar about 1000 feet in width which will be dredged through this season. After leaving the mouth of the Red River there is no obstruction to navigation for vessels drawing 10 to 12 feet of water, as far as the head of Lake Winnipeg. There are good sheltering harbors all along the Lake. I consider it the safest of all the larger Canadian lakes for towing purposes. The lake is sometimes stormy, and requires good strong vessels, but the seas do not run high. Limestone Bay, at the head of Lake Winnipeg, is about four miles in depth, and has about 12 feet of water at the mouth; it is deeper inside. It is considered a very safe bay. Think it would make the very best terminus for lake navigation as a part of the route to Hudson's Bay.

I think that if a combined water and rail route were established from the head of navigation on the Red River to Hudson's Bay, that a very large traffic would be created. Barges drawing six feet of water could be towed from Grand Forks to the head of Lake Winnipeg safely, which would save transshipment. They would require to be made stronger than the ordinary river barge. Such a barge would carry about 500 tons, or about 15,000 bushels of wheat. The barges from Winnipeg might be much larger, and have a capacity of 1500 to 2000 tons. From what I have heard from many persons living in the State of Minnesota and Dakota Territory, shippers would be only too glad to avail themselves of the improved river and lake navigation, and ship their wheat *via* Hudson's Bay if a railway were built for the purpose. Think that a grant will be made by the U. S. Government for improvement of the Red River from Grand Forks to the boundary line. There are six steamers now plying on Lake Winnipeg, three large and three smaller, and seventeen barges, some of which are of 500 tons capacity, and have been running for three