

# Railroads To Hudson Bay

HOW THE GREAT TRUNK LINES ARE PLANNING A SHORT CUT TO EUROPE.

(Special Correspondence of the Deseret News by Frank G. Carpenter.)

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WINNIPEG.—I understand that the dominion government has granted charters to no less than eight different railroad companies to build lines to Hudson bay. It is even said that James J. Hill of the Great Northern has such a concession in his inside pocket and that the various Canadian trunk lines are planning branches in that direction. In going northward over the Ontario government's new railroad to Cobalt I was told by the engineers that they would soon reach lake Abitibi, crossing the great clay belt, and that the road would be pushed on to James bay. At Sault Ste. Marie I fell in with the American Central syndicate which owns the Algoma Central charter, providing for a railroad from Sault Ste. Marie to Hudson bay, and was told that the line had been graded for 90 miles and that over 75 miles were in operation.

TO EUROPE BY HUDSON BAY.

According to the last surveys of the dominion government it has been shown that Hudson strait is navigable from the last of July until about the middle of October, and the ice itself is said to be an open sea the year round. The idea is to build great storage elevators at Port Churchill, and to have a line of steamships moving in and out from there to Liverpool during the open season. If this can be done the saving will be enormous, and it will give the Canadian wheat great advantages over ours in the markets of Europe.

Hudson bay is so far north on the globe that the distance between it and Liverpool is remarkably short. It is only about two thousand miles from Port Churchill to Port Simpson, and, if a railroad should be built, the Hudson bay route would be by far the shortest from Asia to Europe and very much shorter from parts of the United States to Europe than the routes now used. The distance from Winnipeg via Hudson bay to Liverpool is 3,600 miles, whereas by Montreal it is 4,225 miles. From Duluth to Liverpool via Hudson bay is 3,725 miles, and the same point by way of New York is 4,200 miles. When this route is opened passengers from St. Paul and Minneapolis can go to Great Britain by traveling 1,100 miles and they will save a railroad journey of at least 500 or 600 miles. The distance from Vancouver to Liverpool by Hudson bay will be 1,200 miles shorter than it is now by the Canadian Pacific railroad, and passengers from all parts of the great west will be able to go quicker and with a shorter rail journey by that way.

AS A GRAIN ROUTE.

The great advantage of this new commercial highway will be in the transportation of grain and other freight. It will bring the wheat of the new northwest a thousand miles nearer salt water. We produced last year

something like 700,000,000 bushels of wheat. It is not extravagant to believe that the great grain belt of the British northwest will produce as much as some one in the future, its yield last year was about a hundred million bushels, and not one-fifth of the land is under cultivation. If the wheat can be transported by way of Hudson bay it is said that the saving might be as much as 15 cents per bushel, and this on a hundred-million-bushel crop would mean a saving of \$15,000,000 per annum. Is it any wonder that the possibility of the route is seriously considered?

In addition to grain would be the enormous supplies which will be needed for the British northwest. This country will eventually support about 20,000,000 people, and they will be among the best customers of the globe. The port would also take away freight from and supply goods direct to the United States. It would be especially valuable in the shipping of live stock, as the climate is cool and the sea voyage short.

CAN HUDSON BAY BE NAVIGATED?

There has in the past been a strong objection to all schemes for the utilization of Hudson bay. A great secrecy has been preserved about the bay, and strangers have been kept from exploring it. There have been two corporations especially interested in this matter: one was the Hudson Bay company and the other the Canadian Pacific railway. The Hudson Bay company was anxious to keep matters quiet because they were getting a half million dollars' worth of furs out of this region, which they had monopolized for 200 years. The Canadian Pacific people knew that if wheat and other freight could be sent via Hudson bay to England their long freight line across the continent would lack traffic. And, therefore, both were interested in keeping the conditions as they were.

As to the possibilities of navigation, these can only be tested by experiment. There is no doubt but that ships can go in and out of this great inland waterway during a part of the year. The Hudson Bay company sailing vessels have been doing so for 274 years. In that time they have had in operation 750 vessels, ranging in size from 70 tons to small boats, and so far they have lost only two.

HUDSON BAY NEVER FROZEN.

The difficulty of navigating Hudson bay lies not in the bay itself, but in Hudson strait, which leads into it. Hudson bay, as I am told, is never frozen. It is like a great ocean and some short distance from the shore is open all the year round. It is an enormous body of water. It is 1,200 miles long and 1,600 miles wide, and its area is one-sixth as big as the whole United States. It has by far the largest drainage basin of all British America. Some of its waters flow to the Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico, the basin includes about three million square miles.

Hudson bay has icebergs and ice floes, but its waters are deep, and it has some good harbors. One of the best harbors is Port Churchill, and it has been picked out as the port for the probable railroads. It will be the best place to reach Winnipeg, the total distance between the two points being about as great as between New York and Pittsburgh. A railroad could easily be built along the route and it is said that much of the land through which it would go is suitable for vegetable raising and small farms.

THE HUDSON STRAIT BARRIER.

The greatest dangers of the Hudson bay route lie in Hudson strait, which

Many Charters Already Granted—Fort Churchill to be the Port—on Outlet For the Wheat Belt and Our Great Northwest—Can Hudson Bay be Navigated?—All About Hudson Strait and its Ice Floes—The Open Season—The Hudson Bay Region is a Summer Resort—A Land of Game and Furs—Something About the Whale Fisheries Which Have Paid Americans Millions—Wild Geese, Quill Pens, Etc.



HOW THE MOOSE IS MADE TO WORK.  
Specially Photographed for the Deseret News by Frank G. Carpenter.

forms the entrance to Hudson bay. It is five or six hundred miles long, and about one hundred miles wide, opening out into the Atlantic a little below the end of Greenland. It is right in the track of the great icebergs and ice floes which come down through Baffin bay and Davis strait from the Arctic ocean, and which are liable to be blown into Hudson strait by the winds. Just as the shores of Ireland, England and the northern part of the European continent are warmed by the gulf stream, so the regions here are cooled by the cold arctic waters, and these icebergs and seas of floating ice. They make Hudson strait colder than it would otherwise be, and this is added to by the winds from the Atlantic, which blow in the icebergs broken off of the shores of Greenland.

From the middle of October until June this strait is sure to be full of ice, at least it will not be safe to go through it at such times. Capt. Wakeham, who was sent by the dominion government here to investigate the navigation a few years ago, reported that the strait was blocked for about 250

miles from the 23rd of June to the 8th of July. The jam consisted of heavy ice in sheets which had drifted one sheet on top of another and jammed up in such a way that a heavily laden vessel could not possibly have gone through it. The sheets were from three to thirty inches thick. Shortly after this time the ice broke and passed away, and the straits were open for the next three months. Capt. Wakeham estimated that the open season would be three and a half or four months.

Dr. Bell of the Canadian geological survey says it is not safe to rely upon Hudson strait being open later than the first week in October, and Capt. Gordon, who commanded one of the exploring parties, says that vessels especially constructed for the purpose will have to be used, and that they should not be of more than 2,000 tons. They should be fortified against the ice and have small propellers well down in the water. It would take a vast number of such steamers to handle the Canadian wheat crop, and unless great whalebacks or the modern grain steam-

ers can be used for the traffic it would hardly pay as a grain route.

One hope of those who advocate the building of the railroads to Hudson bay is that some arrangements will be made by means of ice breakers or other methods by which the ordinary tramp steamer can go in and out of Hudson strait. If this is possible the ships which are used for the grain and freight traffic between Hudson bay and England during the open season can be turned to some other use for the rest of the year. If this is not done the ships will work at a dead loss for nine months of each year, which will, of course, materially increase the freight charges. So far, however, comparatively little is known about the bay and the strait, and it is not safe to risk prophesying as to the future.

A GREAT SUMMER RESORT.

There is no doubt, however, but that some of these railroads will be completed. The Grand Trunk Pacific, which is now building, will run only two or three hundred miles from James bay, and the Ontario government road

will surely be pushed northward to open up the Clay Belt to settlers. The probability is that we shall have railroad connection with Hudson bay within a couple of years or so and that a large part of the game for Toronto, New York and Chicago will come down over these roads. The country will then be filled with tourists and the Hudson bay region may be a favorite summer resort for the North American continent. The woods are full of game. There are caribou by the thousand, plenty of moose, many kinds of deer and no end of wild birds. With steamers on the bay one will be able to take wonderful tours to the least explored parts of the world and a vast mineral region may be opened up. The country is as yet unexplored and unknown. From talks which I have had with Hudson bay traders and explorers, the land about the bay is rocky in places, and in others it is covered with muskeg and swamps. Near James bay there are vast bogs of peat, some of which are 20 feet deep. This could be made into briquettes such as are used in Europe, and it may possibly form the fuel of the country.

NORTH AMERICA'S GREATEST GAME RESORT.

As to hunting and fishing these Hudson bay railroads will open up the chief game resort of the world. The fur wealth is so great that the Eskimos bring in several hundred skins of musk oxen every season in addition to bales of polar bear skins, caribou, wolves and foxes. Some of the finest furs of the world may be seen stacked up like hay on the shore of Hudson bay, awaiting their transportation to the trading posts. In one locality about the bay the Eskimos trapped in one year more than a thousand white foxes, besides wolves, wolverines and other animals.

At present most of the hunting is being done by Eskimos and Indians, who make it a life business. These Eskimos are much like our natives of Alaska. The men average about five feet three inches high, and the women less than five feet. They have black eyes and hair, and their hair is straight and as coarse as horse hair. They have flat noses, high cheek bones and eyes which are Chinese in shape. The teeth of the older women are worn almost to the gums from chewing sealskin, in order to make it soft and more easily sewed. These people live in snow houses during the winter and in sealskin tents in the summer. They subsist largely on seal meat or whale blubber, and their furs are oil lamps. They have but few domestic animals except dogs, although it is said that here and there a moose has been harnessed up and made to work.

THE HUDSON BAY FISHERIES.

I hear much about the fisheries of Hudson bay. Capt. Hall, one of the Hudson bay traders, tells me that the stories concerning their value are overdrawn, but the explorers sent by the government and the vast amount of whale oil and other products brought out by the fishermen lead one to suppose them about the most valuable on the continent. A large amount of the whaling has been done by Americans from Bedford, Mass. These men go through the strait and winter at Marble Island in Hudson bay, near the west coast. They spend one season harpooning whales and buying furs and fish, taking their cargoes out the following year. Among the whales caught are the bowheads, which produce some of the finest whalebone known to the world. A full-grown whale will yield about 1,500 pounds of bone, and as the whalebone sells for \$14,000 a ton, a whale of that kind brings in bone worth

\$10,500. In addition to this the oil in the whale may yield \$30,000. Our statistics show that our whale fisheries there have already realized in 10 years \$1,371,000. There were 50 voyages, the average voyage realizing more than \$27,500. The most of the whale fishing is done from Marble Island. It begins as soon as the ice breaks in the spring and continues until navigation closes. The whales are black ones, many of them 80 or 90 feet long, or big enough to fill a good-sized city lot. In addition there are white whales about 14 feet long. These great fish swim about in shoals so large that they cover parts of the bay like sheets of snow. They are valuable for both their oil and hides.

Another important industry of Hudson bay is walrus fishing. These animals are caught for their hides, which are used for making boots. A good-sized hide will weigh 300 pounds and will sell for 10 cents a pound. The tusks of the walrus are also valuable, bringing about \$10 each.

In addition to the great sea animals there are flipper seals, porpoises and narwhals, which are caught for their oil and hides, and there are also schools of cod, white fish, pickerel and halibut, as well as salmon and grayling. The cod fisheries are largely in Hudson strait.

WILD GEESSE BY MILLIONS.

Hudson bay is the summer home of the wild geese. The marshy lands along its shore grow wild rice, which forms its favorite food, and the geese come there by the millions. The Hudson bay men tell me the hunters use oil-finished guns loaded with small shot which is so good that it is not common to kill 20 geese with one discharge. The flesh of these wild fowl takes the place of pork at the Hudson bay posts. It is dried and salted and during the winter it forms a large part of the diet of the traders. At this time they live almost entirely on meat, and it is not uncommon for one man to eat a whole goose at a meal.

It is from Hudson bay that the quill pens of England still come, and this region for generations furnished the most of the pens of Europe. Quills are still used in English government offices as well as in the houses of parliament, and it was with a Hudson bay quill that King Edward signed his coronation oath. The gathering of the quills has been always done by the Hudson Bay company, which has shipped as many as 10 tons of wild goose feathers in a single year. Only three ounces of such feathers can be gotten from one bird, and it required 120,000 geese to furnish those quills. I had a bunch of the pens presented me by the editor of the Manitoba Free Press and it may interest you to know that I sign this letter with a feather from the wing of a goose which once gobbled here on the shores on Hudson bay.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

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Photo by Savage.

MODERN HIEROGLYPHS IN MEADOW VALLEY WASH.

How Fantastic Figures and Characters Are Being Carved in the Rocks Along the Line of the Salt Lake Route.

The building of the Salt Lake Route made easy of access a country in the Meadow Valley Wash region that is full of historic interest—a country abounding in rocks and cliffs upon which in ages long since past were carved hieroglyphs and other characters which are supposed to tell the story of a race which passed into oblivion ages ago.

Now comes the modern humorist who has chiseled and painted pictures and letters of a later age, which in the dim and distant future may be taken seriously and regarded as a narrative of an extinct people. In the halftone above are displayed a pair of dancers doing a cakewalk. Near by is that animal which an American wit described as being without pride of ancestry and

without hope of posterity. And her name is Maude, Jumbo, the defunct elephant over whose mastodon-like size the whole quadruped kingdom was envious a few years since, is given a prominent place. In close proximity is a desert tarantula whose very appearance makes the traveler shudder while Schneider's dog, Fritz, looks on with watchful eye and pointed nose. On the

extreme left on an expanse of rock wall is a caricature of the famous equine J. I. C., and farther up the mountain side the wall of a Weary Willie who has left this inscription in stone as evidence of his satire and experience: "This is the d—est, longest, crookedest and hardest railroad to beat, in the whole country. I guess I know for I have tried it."

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