

opening of the season from the immediate vicinity of the object of their pursuit. Although nearly all the overland voyages of discovery have resulted from the different Arctic sailing expeditions, yet the greater part of the information has been collected by the land-journeys of each. Of the expeditions of 1826, Sir John Richardson alone succeeded in navigating the Arctic regions up to the meridians required by the Parliamentary stipulations to earn the promised reward.*

It is now believed that, on a nearer approach to the North Pole, a milder climate and an open sea will be reached; and it is evident that under any circumstances the whale and fishery trades might be pursued with greatly increased advantages, if the whole season could be occupied in their actual prosecution without the loss of time in reaching and in returning from the scenes of their labours. In practice and in effect new seas would be added to their domain.

The opening of the Mackenzie River would also render the Coppermine region accessible. The approach, as might prove most convenient, might be made either by the Slave Lake and its northern tributaries, or by the Great Bear Lake, more probably by the latter. The great metallic wealth of this district is well known. The frequent theme of Indian converse at the settlements of the first traders, the asserted existence of these great mines in some part of the continent, has been one of the earliest and chief stimulants to discovery. The reality of their existence, corroborated by Hearne, has been fully established by Sir John Franklin. Of sufficient magnitude and importance to arrest the attention of the Indian, to arouse and keep alive the spirit of enterprise for several centuries, and, upon discovery, to give their name to a range of mountains, a river, a region, and a tribe of Indians, the difficulty of reaching them with sufficient transport has been supposed to render them for ever practically worthless. The opening of the Mackenzie would completely obviate this difficulty, and the Great Bear Lake itself, as well as the Mackenzie, supply, by their coal measures, an abundance of fuel.

The Hare Indians, who take their name from the animal, which abounds in incredible numbers upon the Mackenzie, and forms a principal part of their subsistence, inhabit a tract of country below the confluence of the Bear Lake River. The country is well wooded, but intersected by lakes and marshes, and numerous minor rivers.

Wild-flax grows in luxuriant abundance, the old plants lying on the ground while the new ones are rising up among them. On approaching the numerous channels by which the Mackenzie flows

* It was not granted, having been construed to apply exclusively to ships, and not to boats.