

SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORT.

the ice that shall come down the nameless (Fox) and from Baffin's Bay, than the channel to the southward does.

Hudson's Strait is about 500 miles in length and varies from 45 miles to 150 miles in breadth, having an average of about 100 miles. The two narrowest points in the Strait are between Cape Best of Resolution Island and the Button Islands, at the eastern entrance, and opposite North Bluff, near the Savage Islands. Between Resolution Island and the mainland and on the north side of the Strait, there is a wide passage of some 10 miles, called Gabriel Strait. Button Islands, on the south of the entrance, are at least 10 miles from the mainland of Labrador. There are no less than three eastern entrances into Hudson's Strait; the first, 10 miles in breadth, between Resolution and the North Shore; the second or main entrance, between Cape Best and the Button Islands, 45 miles in breadth; and lastly, the several channels lying between the islands on the coast of Labrador, of which four are marked on Captain Beecher's chart, within a breadth of 10 miles. The steamers of the Company bound for Ungava Bay pass between the Button Islands and the mainland of Labrador.

As the prevailing winds are from the north or north-west, it is most probable that Gabriel Strait will be the one for steamers to take, as they will by that means escape the ice driven by the winds through the main or south entrances. It is stated that sailing ships are not taken in that way because the currents are very strong, and the north shore being very high they are liable to be becalmed and thrown on the rocky shore.

The difficulty of effecting an entrance in the summer with sailing vessels arises from the drifting floe ice, and the following extract from a work written by Capt. Beecher, R. N., in 1842, will serve to illustrate this point:—"George Best has given, in his narrative of the voyage, a formal dissertation on the general features of the mistaken straits of Frobisher, in which the proof that it was no other than Hudson's Strait must be looked for. We have already accounted for the ships having drifted down to the entrance of Hudson's Strait, and it appears that once within that entrance the progress to the westward was comparatively easy." A circumstance also observed by Sir Edward Parry, who says:—"We continue to gain a great deal of ground, the ebb tide obstructing us very little. Indeed from the very entrance of Hudson's Strait, but more especially to the westward of the lower Savage Islands, it was a matter of constant surprise to find our dull sailing ship make so much progress, when beating against a fresh wind to the westward."

Captain Bishop, now commanding the Hudson's Bay Company's vessel the "Prince of Wales," writes under date of 18th of March, 1881:—"My average passage from the entrance of the Strait to the head of the same has