

four knots an hour, then following the coast of Florida, going northward, passes about half-way between New York and Bermuda diminishing in speed, and flows in almost a straight line to the coast of Ireland, and around the British Isles. I may say that the current is reduced there to about half a knot in 24 hours, and I might also say en passant that it would be quite sufficient any time to remove floating mines that might be around the British Isles, as that steady current running northward would carry them up north whence they may never return. That is on the east side of the Atlantic. Then the Gulf stream flows still farther. It goes on and washes the coast of Norway, and actually enters—and this is rather interesting—the Arctic ocean and on to the 69 parallel which is 2 degrees inside the Arctic circle, and along the northern side of Norway, and goes on still farther, passing the eastern boundary line of Norway, and following the northern coast of Russia for 150 or 200 miles and it may be very surprising to know that these shores, although in the Arctic ocean, are almost free from ice. That is why the Russian Government are building a double track standard gauge railway from Kola bay, 1,200 miles down to Petrograd. The Gulf stream having gone that way and become chilled by the Arctic waters, returns south by way of Davis strait and Baffins bay bringing down icebergs. That is why, in the spring of the year, you notice the icebergs moving south all the time along Hudson straits and the coast of Labrador. We cannot change climatic conditions. Just as the warm Gulf Stream influences the climate of the British Isles, and Norway, the cold current that comes down Baffin bay and Davis straits, and out of Hudson straits flows along the Labrador coast, keeps the temperature, even in summer on the northern part of Newfoundland very cold, and makes it so that the straits are never free of ice. If you read the Government report of the trips of the Alert and Neptune, one by Commander Lowe, and another by Commander Wakeham, you will find there is ice in the straits every month of the year, and there are terrible storms about the middle of August. It has been impossible to enter Hudson Straits before the middle of July every year. The straits are 550 miles long, and there is a current sometimes 9 miles an hour running through them with the ebb and flow of the tide.

S-154

Now we all know the peculiarities of the tide. It is not changed underneath at the same time it changes on the surface, therefore a tremendous iceberg rising 40 or 50 feet or more above the surface, and probably extending down below the surface ten times that number of feet will be carried in one direction and the surface ice in another, and woe to the vessel that is caught in the surface ice, with the iceberg coming towards it at a speed of six or seven miles an hour. It is bound to be wrecked, unless specially constructed as those vessels intended to navigate Hudson Bay are built. I may say that these vessels, constructed to withstand the ice pressure, are very poor carriers, because they are made so strong that there is hardly any place for freight. I have already stated that I do not think it is possible or probable that any one would send his grain by the Hudson Bay route. It is well known and generally admitted that the grain crop of one year cannot be taken out the same year by that route. It cannot be taken out before August of the following year. If you figure out the interest on the value of that wheat, the cost of storage, and moreover the enormous marine insurance you would have to pay for any vessel that would attempt to use that route, you find that it cannot compete with existing transportation lines. In conclusion I would ask the Government if they would kindly give the information I have asked for as soon as possible. I think when this House realizes the amount of money involved in completing that project, those who have influence with the present Government will ask them to stay their hand at least for a little while until the finances of the country permit them to go on with it.

Hon. Mr. WATSON—It is not often I take exception to the remarks of the hon. gentleman, but on this subject I do. I have some sympathy with the hon. gentleman's idea that at the present time the Government should not spend a very large amount of money at Port Nelson, but so far as the building of the Hudson Bay Railway is concerned, I think he is a little late in the day to suggest that it should be abandoned. He says it is a good job that some of us are constantly in public life and able to look back and advise the new-comers as to what has taken place in the past. The first committee of the House of Commons upon which I had the honour of being a