

the old Bankruptcy Law. I say it is inconsistent with the first paragraph, in which we are told that the towns of the Dominion are fairly prosperous; but as the returns show that the increase of failures has been very considerable, particularly the last few years, I assume that such a provision as the one named in the Address is an absolute necessity.

We are told, also, that in pursuance of the vote of last session, a vessel was fitted out in order to ascertain the feasibility of the Hudson Bay scheme. As to the wisdom of that policy, honorable gentlemen know my views. When the hon. Senator from Montreal—who I regret is not now in his place—first brought this subject before the House, I then took the ground that if it were feasible I thought we were not acting in the interests of the people of Canada in favoring a scheme which was going to divert the whole trade of the North-West through the waters of the Hudson Bay and the north Atlantic instead of through its natural channel, the older Provinces of Canada. We have been spending hundreds of millions of dollars in opening up avenues by which the products of the North-West could reach tide water; and it seemed to me to be inconsistent with our policy that before these avenues have been completed, and the wisdom of our large expenditure put to the test, that we should be actually preparing to divert the whole of that traffic to another route in which the people who contributed this large sum of money have no possible interest. But I had always entertained a belief that the scheme was a chimerical one: that it was adopted by the Government simply as a foil. They knew there was a good deal of dissatisfaction existing in the North-West, because the people were told there that the products of their farms must reach tide water entirely through British channels, and over one railway; and to meet this proposition the Hudson Bay scheme was allowed to take form and shape, and Parliament was asked to vote a large sum of money to test the possibility of it. I have no doubt it may be that under certain circumstances and for a limited time, a vessel can succeed in getting through; but that the Hudson Bay affords free and easy communication between Europe and the North-West I am disposed to deny.

Railway schemes were favored last year and the year before by which the traffic from the North-West was to reach Hudson Bay, and we are now spending this considerable sum of money in ascertaining whether a vessel can navigate the waters of Hudson Bay and Straits. The probability is that like some of the Arctic expeditions, we shall have to send another vessel to try and get the exploring vessel out of the ice. We know that those waters are so filled for many months of the year with vast quantities of icebergs, that it is wholly unsafe for any vessel to navigate them except during a very limited period of the summer season.

The proposition to represent Canada at the Antwerp exhibition is one that I quite approve of, and I think also it would be proper that we should share in the Colonial and Indian exhibition that is proposed to be held in England in 1886. It is a legitimate way of advertising the products of Canada, and of showing the advance that we have made in the growth and prosperity of the country.

Various smaller measures are proposed to be laid before us, but those I do not propose to deal with until they come properly before us. The Speech is rather remarkable for its manifold omissions than for the important communications which the Government have vouchsafed to give us.

It is remarkable, there being so important a matter as the termination of the Fishery Clauses of the Washington Treaty, that no reference should be made to the subject; that this paternal Government should not say to the fishermen who have heretofore found a market in the United States, that they hope in their self-reliance that they would still go on and prosper, and that other markets might be open to them in lieu of the important one that is so soon to be closed against them.

There are other important questions that have transpired and have been discussed widely during the recess, that it might have been proper for the Government to advert to, although possibly it might have been an admission of humiliation. Since we last met in this Chamber we know that a very considerable area—an area very much larger than some of the provinces of this Dominion—has been