

The Company have not only had the Grant and Ratification of the Crown, of their Rights as aforesaid, but have also met with the Sanction of the Legislature thereto; and in an Instance, the strongest perhaps that could ever have happened; for in the Year 1708 the Parliament passing an Act for encouraging the Trade to *America*, in which it being declared, It should be lawful for all his Majesty's Subjects to trade into any Part of *America* without Interruption; a Proviso was inserted, that "nothing in that Act should extend to take away or prejudice any of the Estates, Rights & Privileges of the *Hudson's-Bay* Company."

The Company, besides the prosecuting the said Trade, did not neglect sending, at different times, as the State of their Affairs and Abilities would permit them to do, several Ships and Vessels in Search for a North-west Passage from *Hudson's-Bay* to the *South-Seas*, and were at no small Expence therein, not only in one, but in repeated Attempts, and lost several Ships, with their Officers and Crews therein; but after having been at the most likely Places, and by all they could learn from the *Indians*, they could never find there was any such Passage; and though the Crown has been induced formerly, as well as very lately, to send some Ships on that Search (as likewise have some private Adventurers) yet has no such Passage been found, though a Reward of 20,000 *l.* was given by Parliament to those Adventurers if they had succeeded, as they seemed to promise; in which Way the Legislature thought fit to recompence them, and not by breaking in upon this Company's Rights, or wresting from them their Trade or Commerce: On the contrary it is observable, That in the Act which gave that Reward there is contained a Proviso, that "nothing therein contained should extend to take away or prejudice any of the Estates, Rights or Privileges, of or belonging to this Company."

These late private Adventurers finding their Attempts in Search of a North-west Passage had not answered their Expectations, and being tired with the Expence of one Expedition, and, it is believed, satisfied in general that there was no such Passage, and being disappointed in their Hopes of the 20,000 *l.* Reward they had not been able to merit, they (instead of further pursuing new Discoveries) turned their Thoughts towards getting Settlements in old ones, as that was more sure, and a ready Way to reimburse themselves. For this Purpose they petitioned his Majesty in Council, for a Grant and Charter to share with this Company in their Trade to *Hudson's Bay*, grounding their Merit on the aforesaid Attempt they had made for discovering a North-west Passage; and that tho' they had not been more successful therein than this Company have been, yet, if they had a Charter, they should however be more successful in the Trade; and, to make Way for such New Charter, they laid several Things before his Majesty to impeach the old Charter, and this Company's Conduct under it: Which Petition having been referred to his Majesty's Attorney and Solicitor-General, they, on hearing the Evidence on both Sides, have reported, "That, considering how long this Company had enjoyed and acted under their Charter, it was not adviseable for his Majesty to disturb them therein; and, as to the particular Charges made against the Company, that they were either not sufficiently supported in Point of Fact, or, in a great measure, accounted for from the Nature and Circumstances of the Case."

Those Adventurers, not obtaining what they had so applied for from the Crown, then entertained Thoughts of making a like Application to Parliament; but, not seeing any Prospect of Success that could attend so unreasonable a Project, and thus defeated in all their Expectations, and moved by their Disappointment, they have now endeavoured to do this Company all the Injury in their Power, by representing them to the Public in a Light they do not deserve.

The Manner of the Company's carrying on Trade in those Parts is, by Factories established on the most considerable Rivers that come into the Bay, at such convenient Distance as those Rivers will admit the Company's Ships to go; there being many and great Falls in the Rivers in those Parts; and, at which Factories, the Company have Officers and Servants they maintain all the Year, and where the Merchandise the Company send yearly from *England*, in several Ships, is deposited for trafficking with the *Indians*, and which are well known to the *Indians*, from the Resort they have had thereto for a Course of Years; and who, upon the first Breaking-up of the Ice in the Rivers, come down thereto in Canoes loaden with Furs, from all Parts of the Country, which they barter with the Company for *British* Commodities they take back in Return; and the Company always take whatever they bring, and supply them with whatever they want; and at Prices the *Indians* are not dissatisfied with, nor can procure them elsewhere cheaper. And this Company, who have brought the Trade to be beneficial, would readily endeavour to make it more so, if it was practicable; and their Credit is such, that, if a greater Increase of Capital was found necessary for such Purpose, they could easily procure it; but unnecessarily to do that, would only be opening a Door to Frauds, to the Injury of many unwary Persons; which Experience has shewn to have been the Case in some other Companies, now sunk in Discredit.

The principal Articles of Trade in these Parts is supplying the Natives with Guns, and Powder and Shot, they subsisting wholly by hunting (except the *Eskimaux-Indians*, who are Fishers), and with Cutlery-ware, Cloth, and some other of the *British* Manufactures; and the Company take in Return the Furs of the wild Beasts the *Indians* kill, and which are of various Sorts, and amongst them large Quantities of Beaver, which are all brought to *England* by the Company, and sold to the Furriers here at Two publick Sales in the Year by Auction, to their intire Satisfaction, and who carry on the valuable Manufacture of Hats therewith: The Company also trade with the *Eskimaux-Indians* in the Streights and Northern Parts of the Bay for Whalebone and Oil, and allow their Captains 25 *l.* per Cent. on the neat Produce thereof, to encourage that Traffick, those *Indians* being dextrous in the killing Whales they meet with in those Parts.

From the Nature of this Trade, it is apprehended, if it was laid open (but which, it is conceived, cannot be, without the greatest Violation of this Company's Charter), it would not long subsist, nor be able to withstand any Injury offered by straggling Traders to the Natives in those Parts, with whom a Confidence has been