

expenditure is feasible ; but, if ever there were a wild-cat scheme put before the people, I believe this is the scheme, and, whether it be started as a colonization road or not, it will be floated on the English markets as a road to Hudson Bay, and every dollar obtained on the English markets for the road to the Saskatchewan will be obtained for a Hudson Bay scheme, and therefore it will be obtained on false pretences, because that bonus from the Manitoba Government will not be given until the road is completed to Hudson Bay. Therefore, this House should discuss this question not as a local colonization road to the Saskatchewan, but as a road to be built to Hudson Bay, and which can only benefit the contractors. In going into this matter, I propose to quote certain authorities, but before doing this I would remark that nearly all the statements and papers given us by the promoters of this road are slightly coloured. Take the question of distance : They claim that Churchill is 700 miles from Winnipeg. Every engineer will tell us, and every practical railway man knows, that, in following the curves of the streams and in making the necessary curvatures to get the proper levels, the length is increased to a considerable extent. I have it on good authority that, when this road is completed to Hudson Bay, instead of being 700 miles long, it will be over 800 miles. Then again, as to the distance between Churchill and Liverpool, it is stated that the distance is in favour of Churchill by a few miles. The distance from Churchill to Liverpool is stated at 2,926 miles, and from Montreal to Liverpool at 2,990 miles. In making up this statement, they follow the same line as in the other, and take the longest line from Montreal, by Cape Race. Surely, if the Hudson Straits are navigable, the Straits of Belle Isle are navigable, and that would be in favour of Montreal by 150 miles. This matter of distance is, however, of minor importance. Now, the distance from Winnipeg to Hudson Bay is 800 miles ; the distance from Winnipeg to Fort William is 426 miles, being a difference in favour of Fort William of at least 350 miles. It costs, to carry a ton of grain at present rates, 1½ cents a mile per ton, but grain has been carried, and grain can be carried, on railways at 7 mills per ton. If we take the lower rate at which grain has been carried, we find that we can carry it from Fort William, past Montreal, for less than the difference on the freight between Winnipeg and Churchill. What I mean is this, that what we gain by the difference in favour of Fort William will carry grain past Montreal to Liverpool. Now, I do not propose to take up your time by discussing the navigation of Hudson Bay, because that has nothing to do with this question at all ; but I propose to discuss the navigation of the Hudson Straits, because through the Hudson Straits every vessel must pass, and whether Hudson Bay is closed or whether it is open, matters not. If the Straits are closed, then navigation is closed ; consequently, I propose to confine my remarks to the navigation of the Hudson Bay, and I will try to make them as brief as possible. We know that the *Alert* established several stations through these Straits ; I do not propose to take up every one of them, but only the principal ones through which navigation must pass. In doing this I shall quote from Lieutenant Gordon's report. We find that vessels going into Hudson Bay cannot pass the

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straits before August. The *Alert*, on 7th May, fitted up with stores on board, with the members of the expedition, sailed out from Halifax at 11 a.m. Surely this was early enough to try the Straits. Now I will quote from his report :

" On June 15th, at 5 p.m., made the edge of the ice about 35 miles east of Cape Resolution, the ice, though heavy, was slack ; steamed in, working as near course as possible. At 1:30 a.m. of the 16th made the land—Cape Best. The ice was now run tight together, so we banked the fires and left the ship to pull under a foretopsail and E. T. staysail. From June 15th to July 6th we were drifting with the ice. At times the ice would run abroad and then the ship was worked under steam or sail, in whatever direction seemed most promising. I append hereto a chart on an enlarged scale, showing approximately our drift in the ice."

This shows the condition of things at the eastern end of the Straits. The *Alert* passed through, planting observation stations at different points. —

" On the following morning, August the 4th, observed a vessel in the ice in the Straits, supposed to be the Hadson's Bay Company's ship *Diana*, bound for Fort Chino. The ice was so thick around the shore that it was with difficulty we were able to work our way into the harbour (Port Burwell), and when in there the ice was jammed so tightly that I walked from the ship to the shore without difficulty. Arrived at Churchill August 31st, soundings all the way across the bay. We made Knightshill Beacon at 8 a.m. of the 31st, and anchored in Churchill harbour at 2 p.m. the same day. Stopped at Churchill to survey harbour. Started on return voyage September 7th. On the morning of the 7th, we left Churchill and shaped course across the bay ; no field ice was met with except a few scattered pans lying off the south-east end of Salisbury Island ; there were, however, quite a number of icebergs, sometimes eight or ten being in sight at one time."

Now follows the ice record at Nottingham Island :

" NOTTINGHAM ISLAND, STATION NO. 5.—ICE RECORD.

" [September, 1884.]

" 1st. Closely packed ice extending across the Straits.
" 2nd. Ice moving with the tide, large field near Cape Digges, not much change in appearance from yesterday.
" [October, 1884.]

" 1st. Clear water in middle of Straits, heavy pack along the shore.
" 2nd. Straits full of ice as far as can be seen, no open water visible.
" 3rd. Ice loose, body of pack has moved east.
" 4th. Fog bank to the south in a.m. ; in p.m. cleared and showed heavy field of ice lying north and south to the east of the island, clear water to south-west.
" 5th. Snowstorm ; ice packed on the shores.
" [November, 1884.]

" 24th. Heavy ice closely packed in the Straits.
" 25th. Heavy ice moves east and young ice forms in the Straits.
" 26th. Straits opposite are frozen as far as can be seen.
" 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th. Ice solid and immovable extending in every direction.
" 31st. Ice east of here moving to north-east, ice to south remaining stationary."

This shows that navigation was closed before 24th October. I will now give winter record :

" [January, 1885.]

" 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th. Ice solid in every direction.
" 5th. Snowstorm.
" 27th. Drifting snow.
" 28th. Ice packed closely in every direction.
" 29th, 30th, 31st. Straits completely blocked.
" [February, 1885.]

" 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th. Ice packed solidly in every direction.
" 5th, 6th, 7th. Snowstorm and drift.
" 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th. Straits blocked with heavy ice.
" [March, 1885.]

" 1st, 2nd, 3rd. Ice solid in every direction.
" 4th, 5th. Snowstorm and drift.
" 6th. The Straits to the eastward is clear of the heavy ice and is now covered with a smooth sheet of young ice.
" 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th. Heavy ice closely packed in every direction."