
Notes on the Navigation of Hudson Bay

"Navigation in Hudson Bay and James Bay," says Sidney C. Ellis, 1911 Report, pages 33-35, "has been carried on more or less extensively since the year 1610, when the intrepid navigator, Henry Hudson, made his first trip into Hudson Bay. In the succeeding years several expeditions were sent up to follow up Hudson's discoveries and find a passage to the Western Ocean. These resulted in fairly accurate knowledge of the west side of Hudson Bay."

"In 1631 Captain James followed much the same course to the cape, which he named after the Queen, 'Henrietta Maria.' From this point he sailed southward along the west coast of the bay which bears his name, and after many times nearly meeting shipwreck on shoals, finally ran his ship aground on Charlton Island, where they passed the winter."

"So far as Hudson Bay itself is concerned, there is no question that its waters are safe for navigation for quite six months of the year, even for longer. As a matter of fact, the real difficulty lies not in the bay, but in the strait itself. With the object of attempting to demonstrate what may be expected in regard to the above period of navigation, several expeditions have at various times been despatched north in an endeavor to ascertain the true conditions prevailing in Hudson Strait."

"Hudson Strait has a length of 180 miles from east to west. It has a practicable channel at least 35 miles wide with from fifty to two hundred fathoms of water. Thus there is no danger from stranding on the and moreover, a number of safe harbors exist both on the south sides of these straits. In short, if situated in more latitudes, the route would be considered an ideal one for the navigator."

In 1903 and 1904, Mr. A. P. Low, commanding the C.G.S. *Arctic*, carefully investigated conditions affecting opening and closing dates for navigation, and the results of his work are summarized as follows:

"The period of safe navigation for ordinary iron ships through Hudson Straits and across Hudson Bay to Churchill may be taken to extend from the 20th of July to the 1st of November. This period might be extended without much risk by a week in the beginning of the season and perhaps by two weeks at the close."

The terminus at Moose Factory will be in latitude 51 deg. as compared with Fort Nelson, the terminus of the Hudson Bay Railway, which lies in latitude 57 deg. and is located approximately 420 miles further north than the proposed Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway terminus; at Moose Factory, James Bay, or in other words Moose Factory is about as far south of Fort Nelson as Toronto is south of Cochrane.
