

REPORT AND EVIDENCE ON THE CHANNELS OF THE ST. LAWRENCE, &c.

The Pilots told me that it was fortunate for them that the weather had moderated; among the Shipwrecks which have occurred in that passage, I recollect that of a large vessel conducted by one *Godebout*, seven years ago; that Shipwreck would not have taken place had he been acquainted with that passage, and every Pilot ought to be acquainted with it, as notwithstanding their skill they may get into it; the North Channel which I am well acquainted with is deeper than the South Channel, and the Traverse opposite *Cap Tourmente* is a safe one, sufficient for the passage of the largest vessels; from *Cap Mailard* to *Cap Tourmente*, the anchorages are very good; that called *la Prairie* at the *Ile aux Coudres* is the best between *Bic* and *Quebec*. A vessel may be hauled up there to be careened; I have done so myself; the Brig *Hen*, which was cast ashore on *Ile Rouge*, and had sustained much injury was conducted under my direction to the *Ile aux Coudres* to be careened, and the sole reason of her being conveyed to *Quebec* for that purpose was the want of workmen at *Ile aux Coudres*; a vessel sustaining damage on descending might be repaired at *Ile aux Coudres* and pursue her voyage, whereas if obliged to go back to *Quebec*, she would be forced to winter there; vessels which do not sail until late in the autumn make much better passages by the North Channel, for by that course they avoid the ice which collects in larger quantities in the South Channel; and were I free to choose for myself, between those two Channels, having a vessel to conduct in the autumn, I should prefer the North Channel; from the *Brandy Pots* to *Crane Island* there is no securer Harbour, sheltered against strong winds, than *La Prairie* at *Ile aux Coudres*, and all Pilots ought to know it.

Lieutenant Colonel *Bouchette*, was called in and stated:—My Map of *Lower-Canada*, was constructed and compiled chiefly from plans and actual surveys of various parts of the Province, of record in my office, and also from partial surveys and observations of my own; that part of my Map embracing the *Saint Lawrence* from *Quebec* to *Bic*, was attentively compiled from the most recent surveys previous to one thousand eight hundred and fourteen, and the soundings were laid down chiefly upon the information of Captain *Lambly* and of some of the oldest Pilots in the River, as well as the Shoals and general course of the Channel; it was after that, that I had an opportunity of ascending and descending the River with a view of ascertaining whether the bearings, courses and soundings of my Map were correct, and it was on my descending the River on board of His Majesty Ship *Ajax*, that I took the views of the several Head Lands and Islands exhibited on my Map; their bearings from the several parts of the Channels, and more immediately in the Traverse, to which I added the soundings that were taken in descending the River; all which convinced me of the general correctness of that part of my Map in reference to the South Channel, but I had not an opportunity of verifying any part of it which related to the North Channel. Col. *Bouchette* further adds that from observations of the North Channel, made in the summer one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven, he is of opinion that this Channel is not only practicable, but of the greatest service to the Navigation of that part of the River, and this opinion of his agrees perfectly with that of Captain *Bayfield* of the Royal Navy; I perfectly know these two Channels as exhibited in my Map; the South I am more particularly acquainted with, and as to the North, I never passed through it, and the information conveyed in my Map of the Channel is from former Maps of that part as relates to the soundings, but actual surveys as relates to the configuration of the Land; I have frequently thought it singular that such a Channel apparently free from impediments, comparatively speaking with those found in the South Channel, should not be better known, and finally more or less practised. I cannot account for this Channel being abandoned and neglected after it had been practised by the French, previous to one thousand seven hundred and fifty-nine, and at that period also adopted by the British Fleet. I am fully of opinion that a perfect knowledge acquired of that Channel would not only be of a great utility for the purpose of navigation, but might carry with it results which might prove of the highest importance to the Commercial Community and to the Country at large; I cannot say why the Authorities do not examine Pilots relative to that Channel, but am fully aware of the importance it would be to navigation, that the Pilots of the River should be examined in respect to a perfect knowledge of both these Channels.

Q. What means would you advice for imparting to the Pilots accurate knowledge, of those Passages in the readiest manner?

A. By a correct nautical Survey of that part of the River, and by the Pilots being acquainted with that Channel, and being only entitled to the Licences as Pilots, after having undergone an examination as to their perfect knowledge of both those Channels.

Q. Do you know the Maritime Chart of Mr. *John Lambly*, and do you think it accurate?

A. I do—and as far as relates to the soundings, bearings, position of Shoals, and general course of the South Channel, I believe it to be correct—but not as to the configuration of the Land on both sides of the *Saint Lawrence*, and shape of the Islands. Considering the distance between the extremity of the *Island of Orleans* to *Malbaie*, the extreme Breadth of the River *Saint Lawrence*, the necessity of laying down with mathematical precision, the position of the Shoals, Islands, Reefs of Rocks, course of the Channel, Depth of Water, and in fact all that can tend to construct a correct Map of that part of the River for nautical purposes, I should conceive that three hundred and fifty Pounds, would cover the expence of such a Survey, comprising three Copies of the Report, Plan and Field Notes; and although the South Channel would not be the object of the Survey, yet the position of most of the Islands would have to be taken and minutely ascertained in the course of the actual Survey, the more so from the comparative exhibit you wish to have of the soundings in both Channels, and of the consequent observations and remarks which must accompany so important a Report in relation to the propriety of adopting the one Channel in preference to the other or of using both.