

at rare intervals. Experience goes to show that there is small probability of making such passage in the first half of the season and seldom in any season. A 20-knot steamer could easily maintain her speed on that part of her voyage between the iceberg region and the British coast, but through the 300 miles or more, in which ice and fogs prevail, the average speed could scarcely be reckoned at a higher rate than 6 or 8 miles an hour. For the remaining 800 miles to Montreal, I fear it would not be possible to maintain full speed on much of the distance. In day-light and clear weather there would be nothing to prevent a 20-knot steamer running at full speed ; but it is not always clear, and in a river with rocks and shallows in each side, with steamers and sailing craft passing frequently, with intricate turnings in at least portions of the channel, the speed would very often have to be reduced, and indeed it would be fortunate if at times the engines had not to be stopped. For these reasons I am inclined to think that a considerable reduction from full speed must frequently be expected. It is quite true that steamships constructed to run swiftly would always have the advantage over slower vessels, and that whenever an opportunity offered they would have it in their power to proceed at the height of their speed, and in part make up lost time. I have already said that, with a combination of favourable circumstances, rapid passages could be made on this route. With no fog, no ice, no snow, with fair weather and a clear sky, the swiftest steamer could run at full speed, and it would under such circumstances be possible to make wonderfully quick passages.

The conditions of the route from the St. Lawrence to Great Britain by way of Cabot Strait are not in all respects the same as those referred to. This route is available nearly two months earlier in summer than the Belle-Isle route, but it is considerably less direct. There are from five to six months when the navigation of the St. Lawrence is practically closed. In May the field ice which has since February accumulated on the banks of Newfoundland begins to disperse, and icebergs appear in considerable numbers, the advance guard of the stream of icebergs borne south by the Arctic current. These icebergs drift some distance westerly after passing Cape Race. In occasional years very few are seen. Fog is not uncommon. Steamships can avoid much ice by taking a southerly course across the banks, but field ice may