

cold out there, but the more one studies the subject the more one is convinced that after all the country around Hudson bay is almost a banana belt. Here is what Dr. Bell says, and in giving you these quotations I do so that you may have some idea of the climate and of the feasibility of navigating the straits. If it can be shown that the building of this road is practicable, as I believe it is, then we ought to proceed with it. If not, we should let the matter drop. Dr. Bell says:

Both the bay and the straits are remarkably free from rocks and shoals, which might interfere with her free navigation. The groups of islands near the east side of the bay are surrounded by deep water, and a wide channel leads up the centre of James bay. Fortunately the main body of the bay, which is the portion likely to be hereafter frequented by shipping is entirely without shoals, reefs or islands. The depth is very uniform over most of the bay, and nowhere does it present any great irregularities. It averages about 70 fathoms throughout, deepening to 100 and upwards in approaching the outlet of Hudson straits; while in the strait itself the soundings along the centre vary from about 150 to upwards of 300 fathoms. The bottom appears to consist almost everywhere of boulder clay and mud. Near the shores a stiff clay, affording good holding ground for anchors is almost invariably met with on both sides.

As regards the climate, Mr. O'Sullivan says:

The ordinary half-breeds are more easily coaxed to eat than to swim any day. No matter how often you propose lunch they are always ready, but it is not so often you get them to strip and wash themselves. This day, however, I succeeded in getting them all to take a plunge and we enjoyed it immensely. The water was in excellent condition, reminding one of Old Orchard Beach or Chester bay. I have never found the water as warm in any part of the St. Lawrence or in Bay des Chaleurs as we found it on the east main coast in the end of August and beginning of September—

I would like hon. members for the east to take note of this statement:

—and I have no doubt that if easy communication could be had by rail, the most northern limit of our province would prove an attractive scene for tourists and health seekers.

Let me give you some information regarding temperatures because there seems to be the idea that the climate is an arctic one. Here is what Dr. Bell says on that point:

I took the temperature of the sea upwards of 20 times during our voyage which extended over the greater part of July, August and September, and I found it to average 53 degrees of Fahrenheit. I also noted the temperature of the rivers which we visited and found the average of five of them to be 61 degrees Fahrenheit. We bathed in the salt water almost daily and found the temperature agreeable.

He winds up by saying:

The average temperature of the air between July 11 and September 21, from the above observations, would appear to be 62½ degrees.

That is better than we have in the Northwest. If we had in September or August such temperature as that, we would not be troubled with frozen wheat.

As most of these observations were taken in the morning or the evening and as the nights were generally warm owing to the prevalence of southerly winds this is perhaps not far from the true mean temperature and it is above the average of the main temperature for these months of ten principal stations from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Fort Simpson, on the Mackenzie river. About two-thirds of the bay in the south might be included in this classification with regard to summer temperature.

Now the climate of this vast territory compares very favourably with that of the western territories:

The temperature of the waters in Hudson bay is several degrees higher than that in Lake Superior and Lieutenant Gordon declared that the bay might be regarded as a vast basin of comparatively warm water, a fact which must help to mitigate the severity of the winter in the surrounding country.

My good friend opposite (Mr. Knowles) spoke of the ice being easily kept clear by means of ice breaking vessels. But, as a matter of fact, the bay freezes very little and is besides remarkably free from storms and fogs:

The waters are deep and uniform and the soundings of 480 feet at many points indicate that its bed is a level plateau. Now as to the opening and closing date of the harbour of Fort Churchill since 1825 can be given.

I am not going to give all the temperatures for fifty years, but I shall give you a few taken at random between the dates I have mentioned. I may say that since I started to make this address, I have heard men saying what is the good of Hudson bay, it is only open two months in the year. Well, I am going to furnish proof that these gentlemen are altogether mistaken:

1824, open June 12, closed November 18—five months, six days.

1827, open June 24, closed November 13—four months and twenty days.

1834, open June 21, closed November 15—four months and twenty-five days.

1844, open June 24, closed November 23—five months.

1848, open June 19, closed November 6—four months, eighteen days.

1852, open June 13, closed November 28—five months, fifteen days.

1862, open June 7, closed November 5—four months, twenty-nine days.

1863, open June 5, closed November 11—five months, six days.

1892, open June 19, closed November 11—four months, twenty-three days.