

— No. 3. —

II.
Expedition to
the Mouth of
Mackenzie River.

Sir,

Hudson's Bay House, 21 August 1848.

I AM directed by the governor and committee of the Hudson's Bay Company to hand you the enclosed extract of a despatch received from Sir George Simpson, dated Norway House, 24 June 1848.

I have, &c.

(signed) *A. Barclay*,
Secretary.

H. G. Ward, Esq. &c. &c. &c.
Admiralty.

Enclosure in No. 3.

EXTRACT of a DESPATCH received from Sir *George Simpson*, dated Norway House, 24 June 1848.

SIR JOHN RICHARDSON and Dr. Rae preceded me by nine days, from the Sault de St. Marie, in two canoes, manned by 16 men, and arrived at this place on the 5th instant, taking their departure the following day; and I have no doubt they will overtake Mr. Bell, in charge of the expedition boats, before their arrival at Isle à la Crosse. The boats made a very unfavourable voyage from York last autumn, getting no further than the end of Lac Bourbon, about half way between Lake Winipeg and Cumberland, where they were set fast by ice; and being badly adapted for river navigation, both as regards stowage of cargo and draft of water, a smaller quantity of goods and provisions was brought up from York than Sir John Richardson counted upon; and, being unable to reach Cumberland, Mr. Bell was compelled to use a considerable quantity of provisions which were intended to have been taken in as cargo to Mackenzie River, for the coast voyage. The Europeans, moreover, who were attached to the expedition, say the sappers and miners and sailors, being inexperienced in such labour, were found exceedingly inefficient.

Sir John Richardson was, on leaving La Chine, provided by me with an order, addressed to all officers in the company's service, to meet his demands for men, goods, and provisions, as far as the means at our posts admitted; and since my arrival here I have done everything in my power to provide for the wants of the expedition, by forwarding an extra boat laden with goods and provisions to Portage La Loche, in company with the Mackenzie River brigade, and with great difficulty have prevailed on the crews of that brigade to take in five pieces* of pemican each boat, say 35 pieces in all, over and above their ordinary cargo, specially for the use of the expedition.

The season has been unusually backward in this quarter, there being still ice floating on Lake Winipeg, obstructing Sir John Richardson's progress to Cumberland as well as our own outgoing brigade; and the loss of time arising from this unfavourable season may, I think, prevent Sir John Richardson from accomplishing the voyage along the coast from the Mackenzie to the Coppermine River, which he contemplated. Our latest advices from Mackenzie's River are up to the month of December, and from Churchill up to the 10th of May, at which dates nothing had been heard of Sir John Franklin's party in either of those quarters.

(signed) *George Simpson*.

— No. 4. —

EXTRACT of a LETTER from Chief Factor *James Hargrave* to *Archibald Barclay*, Esq., dated York Factory, 28 August 1848.

THE last advices received from the interior are up to the 9th instant, at which date the brigades for the trading districts had all passed Norway House, inward bound, in safety.

I may mention, as a rumour possessing some interest, that in a private communication of the 1st March, lately received from Mr. Chief Factor M'Pherson, of Mackenzie's River district, he says that "there is a report from Peel's River that the Esquimaux saw two large boats (query ships?) to the eastward of the Mackenzie, full of white men; and they (the Esquimaux) showed knives, files, &c. to the Peel's River Indians, which they had received from these white men. Could these have been Franklin or Rae?"

There is no probability that such could have been the party of Dr. Rae, for his boats never left the southern point of Committee Bay; yet I must observe that no confident hopes ought to be founded on such a report, for Indian information is proverbial for its inaccuracy and exaggeration. I, however, felt it my duty to notice to you that such a report had reached me.

* A piece contains 90 lbs.