

suade him to repeat the trip. He is the only man bearing an Anglo-Saxon name I ever heard of who was scared in going through the straits.

Mr. PRICE: I do not think the hon. member is quoting the member for Hants-Kings correctly. I do not think he made use of that language at all.

Mr. BIRD: Of course he did not. I could not repeat offhand the exact language he used, but the substance of it was that having gone through the straits he was in a superior position to give an opinion on the question. If therefore he was possessed of the information he should have cited a few instances in proof of his assertions so that he might have been checked up. As it is we cannot check him up.

This is more than a matter of sentiment. So far as the navigability of the straits is concerned, no reasonable man here or elsewhere will deny that the whole question is the length of the season of navigation. I want the committee to keep that in mind because it is the kernel of the whole question. Do not let us be led aside by any talk of muskegs along the Hudson Bay railway or by any suggestion of difficulties in engineering, because such difficulties do not exist. The whole problem, I say, consists in the length of season in which the straits may be navigated. Now that problem certainly is not a matter of sentiment, nor is it a matter of mere guesswork. It has been investigated at least three times through money voted by this House. In 1885-86 an expedition was sent out to the bay at the instance of parliament to look into the question, and again in 1896 another and better equipped and a more costly expedition was dispatched to make investigations. And that expedition had the benefit of the findings of its predecessor. Again, in the years 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913 and 1914, at the expense of the country, a more thoroughly equipped and a scientific expedition was sent out for the sole purpose of discovering how long the straits were open for navigation in the course of the summer. The hon. member for St. Lawrence-St. George never mentioned that expedition. He never referred to it, for the simple reason that it was not just favourable to the trend of his speech. That expedition was instructed to enter the straits at the earliest practicable moment and to leave them at the last moment it thought advisable, and it reported in favour of the Hudson Bay route, giving the length of the navigation season at four months as a minimum, with a possibility of extending it at each end. I have before

[Mr. Bird.]

me the report submitted by that expedition and I find in it this statement:

The period during which vessels could enter Hudson strait with comparative safety may be taken to extend from July 15 until November 15, with an extension of a week at either end according to the season.

That was no hasty conclusion; it was the deliberate finding of a careful, well equipped and scientific expedition. So that the question as to the earliest moment at which vessels may enter the straits and the time at which they may safely depart has been settled. It has been known for a good many years that the middle of July may be regarded as the average date at which commerce may enter these straits with any degree of safety. There is no question about that; we do not need to send any more expeditions to discover the fact. It has been settled for all time to come. It is as firmly established in the realm of realities as is the clock tower on this building. We do not need to spend any more money whatever to find it out. It does not matter what documents may be brought forward, those who follow the researches that have been made are bound to come to the conclusion that July 15 marks the beginning of commerce in the straits. The only question therefore which we have to decide is the length of time during which shipping can go on.

Now the hydrographic surveys carried out in the years I have mentioned afford the only instance of any earnest effort having been made to determine the date at which navigation in the Hudson straits closes. The Anderson expedition, sent out particularly with the idea of ascertaining the closing date of navigation, without very much effort found that navigation could go on for at least another month beyond the date set by Wakeham. I believe any reasonable person who reads the story of the Anderson expedition will come to the conclusion that the hydrographic surveys, although they went further than any other expedition along those lines, did not go as far as they might have gone; and it is my belief that in many years the period of navigation will extend over a much longer period than that which the Anderson expedition gave as their conservative report.

The member for East Algoma (Mr. Nicholson) and other hon. gentlemen who have spoken against this proposition have advocated a new expedition. Now, I wonder what more that expedition could find out than has already been found out. How would it help this problem to take in coal and dump it in the Nelson river? I do not know very much about navigation problems—