

SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORT.

I wish to state that the seventeen days we were in the Straits, ice did not delay us all that time. From the time we made Resolution Island we had head wind. We would beat up against the wind till Resolution Island would be lost sight of, and the turn of the tide would carry us back to the island. The current in the Straits is very strong. No difficulty met with only when the wind blows with the current.

I am surprised how people can doubt the navigation of the Straits or Bay on account of ice. Not one man that has come over that route but believes in its practicability. Mansfield island will be a good place for a lighthouse and station. There is a little lake of good water on that island.

The day before we made land we were sailing through large schools of white whales, they being so numerous that we could see them turning on the ships bows. All the ice met with in the Straits was hummock ice which was so rotten that when the ship ran against it it would break. I believe more ice will be met in the Straits in July and August than in May and June.

I was in Franklin Bay in August, 1865, and met a party of Esquimaux who had come from the Gulf of Boothia, * in canoes and boats. The ice set south about one month before, and they were able to travel by water.

(Signed) JAMES WARD.

* NOTE.—The Gulf of Boothia empties through Fury and Hecla Straits (Lat. 70 N.) into Fox's channel, and thence through Hudson's Straits.