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FORT NELSON AND HUDSON'S BAY.

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SINCE Hudson's Bay and the surrounding territories became geographically and politically a part of the Dominion of Canada, all eyes are turned in that direction. The valuable fisheries that exist there, and the fact that a railway or railways are being built from Winnipeg to the coast of the bay are sufficient reasons for endeavoring to make ourselves familiar with that region. We ought to know its early history and the conflicts that have taken place, and especially between the English and the French, resulting in the occupation of the coast country and the far interior of the Hudson's Bay country, and of posts and places, forts and trade houses, by the British and the Dominion.

We learn from French sources that in 1545, only eleven years after Jacques Cartier's discovery of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and his visit to Montreal, one Alphonse, a native of Xaintonge, in France, fired with ambition and love of discovery, made a voyage to the North coast, but that Jean Bourdon penetrated still farther, and that in 1656, with a vessel of thirty tons burden, he explored the whole coast of Labrador, and then went on his course till he reached the Strait of Hudson's Bay, which he succeeded in getting through, then entered the great bay, and went on till he reached the head of these waters, after having made a circuit of seven to eight hundred leagues (French), and that the place he reached was but one hundred and thirty leagues from Quebec by land.

This voyage of Bourdon was made for the purpose of establishing a trade with the Indians of Hudson's Bay.

In 1661, the Indians having become aware that there was a nation of

strangers (not Indians) in their vicinity, sent deputies by land to Quebec, with a view of entering into trade with the French, and at the same time asked that a missionary might be sent to them.

Viscount d'Argenson, who was at that time the French Governor at Quebec, received the application of the Indian chiefs with grace, and undertook to send to their country a Jesuit Father named Dablon, together with Mr. de la Valliere, a gentleman of Normandy, accompanied by Dennis Guyon, Deprez Coutie, and Francois Pelletier. The names of these gentlemen are familiar to the French-Canadians of the present day, both in a civil and political capacity. These gentlemen thought to make the journey, and for that purpose engaged Indians of the Saguenay to pilot them to their destination.

This expedition, however, turned out disastrously; the Indians after making some attempt to conduct them on their journey being obliged to confess that they did not know the route, refused to proceed in the enterprise. In 1663, the Indians, still anxious to get up a trade with the French, sent to Quebec to request Mr. d'Avagour, the then Governor, to send them some Frenchmen, with whom they could establish trade relations.

The Governor this time sent five men, who made their way to the bay by land, and took possession in the name of the King of France. On this occasion they planted a cross on a height of land; they also placed at the foot of a large tree the King's arms engraven on brass.

The English now had their turn. In the year 1666, two French Canadian gentlemen named Des Grozeliere