

R E P O R T

FROM THE

COMMITTEE on the State of The *Hudson's Bay* Company.

The 24th April 1749.

THE Committee appointed to inquire into the State and Condition of the Countries adjoining to *Hudson's Bay*, and of the Trade carried on there; and to consider how those Countries may be settled and improved, and the Trade and Fisheries there extended and increased; and also to inquire into the Right the Company of Adventurers trading to *Hudson's Bay* pretend to have, by Charter, to the Property of Lands, and exclusive Trade to those Countries;—Have, pursuant to the Order of the House, examined into the several Matters to them referred; and find the particular State thereof to be as follows:

Your Committee thought proper, in the first place, to inquire into the Nature and Extent of the Charter granted by King *Charles* the Second to the Company of Adventurers trading to *Hudson's Bay*; under which Charter the present Company claim a Right to Lands, and an exclusive Trade to those Countries: Which Charter being laid before your Committee, they thought it necessary, for the Information of the House, to annex a Copy thereof to this Report, in the Appendix, No. I.

Your Committee then proceeded to examine the following Witnesses; viz.

Joseph Robson: Who said, That he had been in the Service of the Company, and resided at *Hudson's Bay* Six Years; that he went over there in the Year 1733, to the best of his Remembrance, and stayed there Three Years; and went a Second time in 1745, and stayed Three Years more: That the First time he went he was employed as Stone Mason, and resided at *Prince of Wales's Fort*; and the last time as Mason and Surveyor, the Two first Years of which Time he was at *York Fort* or *Hays's River*, and the last Year at *Prince of Wales's Fort*; but he never was up in the Country, except once up at *Nelson's River*, to the Distance of about Forty or Fifty Miles.

That he does not know, nor ever heard of any Settlement up the River; nor did he see any Marks of Cultivation there; that the Company have Four Forts in *Hudson's Bay*, and a small Settlement or Two; but that the Witness was never at any of the said Forts, except the Two before-mentioned; and that he cannot

say how far the Company's Settlements extend North and South.

Being examined as to the Strength of *York Fort*; he said, It was a square Timber Fort, with Four small Bastions; that there were Thirty-six Men in the said Fort, including Servants and Factors, and Nineteen great Guns, Twelve, Nine, and Six Pounders, with Three small Guns on each Curtain, carrying Shot from one Pound to one Pound and an half Weight; that Six or Seven Men are necessary to manage a Twelve Pounder.

And being asked, If there were not Indians ready to be called in to defend the Fort? he said he never understood it so, nor had heard any such Thing, or of any Indians in the Company's Pay; that during the Time the Witness was there, the Indians came in and out on account of Trade only, sometimes Two or Three at a time, sometimes Thirty; that there are Indians employed to get Provisions, which they barter with the Company; and if the Indians bring no Game in, they are in that case generally allowed half a Pint of Oatmeal a Day, which is given them to keep them from starving; but that the Indians are, in the Apprehension of the Witness, of a Disposition too cowardly to be of any use in case of an Attack.

And being asked, If the Indians are allowed to lodge in the Fort? he said, Some particular Persons are sometimes.

Being examined as to the Increase of Strength or Number of the Forts, since the Commencement of the War; he said, The Company were building a Fort at *Esquimaux Point*, which he believes is not yet finished; that during the Time the said Fort was building, the Witness wrote a Letter to the Company, that it would be of no use; that the Forts he had seen were insufficient, and that better might be erected there: In consequence whereof the Witness had a Letter, appointing him Mason and Surveyor; but there was not a sufficient Number of Workmen in the Country to keep the Forts in Repair.

That *Prince of Wales's Fort*, when finished, will mount about Thirty-seven Cannon, and is 300 Feet from Bastion Point to Bastion Point, and is built of Stone, and coming down in many Places; that the Company's chief Factor built the Fort, under whose Directions the Witness was employed in the Execution of the Masonry, and built a Part of the East and South Bastions, about Eight Foot high, which stands very well: