

SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT.

1. JOHN MOYES, (EXD. MARCH 24th, 1884.)
2. Engineer,
3. 165 McWilliam St., Winnipeg-

Have been engaged as engineer on a sealing vessel that ran 150 miles into Hudson's Straits in March, 1871. Was sailing out of St. Johns, Newfoundland, for five years, two of which (1871 and 1872) in sealing vessels. In 1871 we left St. John's on the 10th of March; reached Hudson's Straits about the 25th, and then had to run back, lest we should run out of coal. Took about 7,000 seals, arrived in St John's 4th April. The vessel I was in was the "Osprey," about 600 tons, 150 h. p. low pressure engines, which burned a great deal of coal. She was an old fashioned vessel, and was since lost in Buena Vista Bay, east coast Newfoundland. We went in and out of the ice on our way up to the Straits, in search of seals, could have found open water farther out to sea, met nothing but field ice excepting one or two bergs. The only really bad weather we had was in Trinity Bay, N'd., on the return trip. Sealing trips not considered specially dangerous, although vessels are necessarily in amongst the ice all the time. Sealers are insured. The sealers leave St. John's and Harbor Grace, N'd., from 1st to 10th March, after young seals, returning in from two to five weeks, as they get their cargos. They go out after old seals about middle of April, returning by middle of May. The ice met in the Straits was field ice altogether. Sometimes would have to back up three or four hundred yards, and run at the ice to open channel, then go ahead till again stopped and back up again and run at ice. Made way easily in that way, made perhaps three miles an hour. Never thought of altering course on account of ice, but made right for it and pushed through to open water. Sometimes the open water was narrow, not more than quarter mile, sometimes more. Could have found open water all along, if we had coasted round the floes. Ice varies in thickness from four to eight feet, could run through ice 16 feet thick. Ice opens and closes with currents. When we bunt ice, it opens out perhaps for 500 yards. Sealers have iron sterns between 10 and 15 feet, and iron chafing bands, otherwise built of wood. Never heard from any one that the navigation of Hudson's Straits was particularly dangerous. Sealers accustomed to go there in search of seals. Ice breaks up there as early as in any other part. Have not heard of any particular time when sealers can go into Straits in spring, but think that with the improved class of vessels they could go in any time. Ice clings to shores early in spring, but after you get outside of shore ice, find no difficulty in keeping to open water. Sailing vessels that go sealing are allowed to leave 1st March, steamers on the 10th; this is according to agreement between owners. There are upwards of 33 sealing steamers leaving the port in Newfoundland every spring. After the