

expense which their preparation would involve; but, under the circumstances, I said I would not take the responsibility of refusing the motion, feeling that the House should be fully informed with respect to the administration of territorial affairs in the North-West.

Mr. CASEY. The right hon. gentleman is very strong on the subject of expense; but I am sure that the preparation of the return this resolution calls for would not incur any very serious expense. There are a large number of extra clerks employed during the Session for the very purpose of preparing these returns, and the bringing of them down just depends upon how hard these men are worked. It would not involve any considerable expense if the whole return were brought down; but even if it did, it would be very little compared with the importance of having the information. The right hon. leader of the Government says very truly that members are often very inconsiderate in moving for returns; but members have to work to a certain extent in the dark. They do not know what information is in the Department that they need, and they have not always an opportunity to get that information unless they have heard of somebody on the other side of the House. The whole of this trouble arises from the vicious system of not bringing down these returns as a matter of course. All such information should be laid before the House in the form of an annual report. In regard to ordinary expenditure, in regard to the business of this House and the different departments, we get returns in careful detail. We get the details of every messenger's salary and every small expenditure, but in regard to such transactions as those which involve much greater interests and larger sums we get no information unless we move for it, and in moving for it we are to a great extent in the dark. We ought to get information in detail with regard to the management of timber licenses, Crown Lands and colonization companies as well as in regard to trade and navigation.

Mr. BURPEE (St. John) moved the adjournment of the debate.

Motion agreed to.

HUDSON'S BAY.

Mr. DAWSON moved for a return of all information obtained through reports from officers of the Government, correspondence with the Imperial authorities, or otherwise, in reference to the duration of the season of navigation at Hudson's Bay, showing, in so far as has been ascertained, the dates at which the Straits are sufficiently open to admit of the passage of steamers or sailing vessels, the soundings, so far as taken, and the extent to which the Bay freezes over, whether wholly or only to the distance of a few miles from the shores; also, of all reports and documents bearing on the probable resources of Hudson's Bay, showing approximately the numbers and value of whales, seals, walruses and porpoises annually captured in its waters, whether the rumors as to the abundance of codfish in various parts of the bay have been authenticated, and what rivers on its eastern coast are the best adapted for the industry of salmon fishing; also, of all reports on the mineral resources of the regions about Hudson's Bay and the islands therein, showing where coal has been found and in what sections the ores of iron, copper and lead, as well as of the precious metals, are known to occur; also, a map of Hudson's Bay and Straits with all the latest surveys set down thereon. He said: Though this appears to be a very formidable motion, calling for so many things, it will be observed that I call for information. I do not attribute much importance to bringing down lengthy documents and all that sort of thing; but, I think, a synopsis of the information contained in those documents would be quite sufficient, and among so many able young men as there are in the Department of the Interior, I have

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD.

no doubt some one could compile all the information required in a very short time. About four years ago, the Department issued a very interesting pamphlet on Hudson's Bay, giving much valuable information. It would be well if something of the same kind were issued again. A great deal of interest is now being attached to that inland sea, from the fact that railways are projected in different parts to reach it. It would be important to know in what season vessels can enter the bay and how long the bay itself is navigable. The information we have goes to show that it is navigable for a very long period, fully six months at least, but that the straits are sometimes blocked. It is the straits that form the difficulty in going into the bay, but when railways reach the bay this will be done away with. Supposing that vessels were in the bay with people engaged in fishing or other industries, they might remain there to winter, and in spring the bay would be accessible, and the whale oil, seal oil, and the different articles of produce of the bay, could be sent out by rail. Professor Bell, who was employed by the Government to explore the bay, says:

"I have a record of the principal phenomena of the seasons at Martin Falls, on the Albany, extending through a period of fifty years. From it I find that the river is open there on an average for six months of the year. I have also a record of the date of the opening and closing of Hayes River at York Factory, extending over more than fifty years, from which it appears to enjoy an average of fully six months of open water. The Nelson River is open for a longer period. I think with these facts before us we need not despair of successfully navigating Hudson's Bay as far as the length of the season is concerned."

This is very important information. Further on he says:

"Both bay and strait are remarkably free from rocks and shoals, which might interfere with their free navigation. The groups of islands near the east side of the bay are surrounded by deep water and a wide channel leads up the centre of James' Bay. Fortunately the main body of the bay, which is the portion likely to be hereafter frequented by shipping, is entirely without shoals, reefs or islands. The depth is very uniform over most of the bay, and nowhere does it present any great irregularities. It averages about seventy fathoms of water throughout, deepening to 100 and upwards in approaching the outlet of Hudson's Strait, while in the strait itself the soundings along the centre vary from about 150 to upwards of 500 fathoms. The bottom appears to consist almost everywhere of boulder clay and mud. Near the shore a stiff clay affording good holding ground for anchors is almost invariably met with on both sides."

From all this it appears that the navigation of Hudson's Bay is quite practicable as regards the bay itself, and that it is open for no less than six months in the year. When these railways are completed the resources of the bay will be available to this country at large, and it is very important we should know what those resources are. We know that sometimes vessels winter there in open water. We know that whale fisheries are prosecuted there, that the porpoise fisheries have been worked there for many years by the Hudson's Bay Company, and that oil is exported in considerable quantities. Seals, and in the northern part walruses, are very abundant, and the seal oil and skins, and the ivory of the walruses are very important articles of commerce. It has also been pretty well ascertained that codfish are abundant in Hudson's Bay. Were the railways completed to the Bay a wide field would be opened to the enterprise of the people of this Dominion accustomed to fishing, of whom we have a large population in the eastern part of Quebec and in the Maritime Provinces. There can be no doubt now, from the reports of Professor Bell and others, that codfish abound in Hudson's Bay. Again, salmon are to be found in all the rivers, except those in the south of James' Bay, both on the east and west coasts of Hudson's Bay. At certain seasons of the year with the exception I have mentioned, the rivers are alive with salmon. It is said they are as abundant in many rivers as they are in the rivers of British Columbia. It is easy to understand what an opening this affords to establish a trade with the Hudson's Bay, a trade which would come across the land through Canada, and give employment to a great many of our people. It is not alone in fisheries that the resources of