

Page 52:

James Ward left Stromness on the 6th July, 1882, on the Hudson Bay Company's ship, 'Prince of Wales,' Captain Hard, who commanded the vessel, told me that was his forty-sixth trip through the straits. Hudson bay was clear of ice and as smooth as glass. The bay and straits are open all the year round.

Page 53:

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 the route but believes in its practicability. Mansfield island will be a good place for a light-house and station. There is a little lake of good water on that island.

In the annual report of the Department of Railways and Canals at page 22 I find the following reference to the Hudson Bay survey:

It might be mentioned here in passing, the greatly increased difficulty a hostile fleet would have on blockading the Atlantic coast of Canada were the Hudson Bay route opened. The fact that ships may enter and leave Port Nelson all the year round is a fact worth remembering when the possibilities of war are considered.

In a publication by the government called 'Canada's Fertile Northland' I quote from page 117:

Evidence of Robert Bell, M.D., C.M., F.R.G.S., C.E., &c., of the Geological Survey of Canada, given before the Select Committee, March 12, 1907.

Dr. Bell explained that he had been through Hudson strait nine times. The first time was in 1880 in a ship called the 'Ocean Nymph,' a small sailing vessel, and the last time was in 1897 with Commander Wakeham. His trips were distributed over those seventeen years between 1880 and 1897.

All his trips were between June 22 and about October 10.

In navigating the strait during the season between those dates, with a steamship, they never had any difficulty.

Witness never heard that the strait was frozen across in winter.

Dr. Bell said he did not know any more desirable piece of navigation in the world, excepting the middle of the ocean and even then a common sailor who could not take an astronomical observation could sail through the straits with perfect safety. That is what Henry Hudson's men did after putting him and part of the crew into an open boat and leaving them behind.

Now, Sir, I think I have shown that Hudson bay is navigable and that it is open for ten months in the year, instead of being frozen for ten months, as some people allege. We have evidence that wheat can be raised at the 63rd degree of latitude, and do you mean to tell me that a salt water bay located in a latitude without fear of summer frost, is frozen up for ten months in the year.

Mr. CONMEE. And where there is a fairly high tide.

Mr. CHISHOLM. Yes. The Gulf of the St. Lawrence has always been looked upon as somewhat dangerous for navigation, and before its coasts were equipped with wireless telegraphy and its waters charted and modern aids to navigation erected, it was difficult of navigation and the insurance rate on ships was high, and is still high, a thing which has handicapped us in competition with the Erie canal. If we go back we will find that when John and Sebastian Cabot sailed along the north coast of America in 1498 they did not venture into the inhospitable Gulf of the St. Lawrence. We are told that Verazano and Cortéreal also sailed along the Atlantic coast, but there is no proof that either of them entered the gulf. The first man who had the courage to navigate the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, so far as history tells us, was Jacques Cartier, a native of Normandy, and he had in his veins the daring blood of the sea kings. He sailed from St. Malo on the 20th of April, 1534, and we find him in the Baie de Chaleurs in the latter part of July. We do not know the exact date, but we know that the weather was very hot, and so he christened that sheet of water 'Baie de Chaleur' (Hot Bay). Then he went to Gaspé and erected a cross and took possession of the country in the name of his King, Francis the first. The Indians told him there was a great river not far off, the source of which they did not know, and Jacques Cartier sailed for that river and arrived at the Island of Orleans, near Quebec, on the 7th of September, which shows that it was far on in the season before he entered the gulf. There he was met by Donacona. Cartier did not tarry long in these waters on that voyage because he feared being caught in the ice so late in the season. Next year he came back, but he took good care that he would not reach the St. Lawrence even in July, for we find that he landed on the 10th day of August, the feast day of St. Lawrence, after whom he named the bay and the river.

Then he sailed along and succeeded in reaching Hochelaga on the 2nd of October. But he made out to get back to the mouth of the river, but was there frozen in all winter, and could not get away. The next indication we have of the sailing conditions in the Gulf of St. Lawrence is in the coming of Champlain. Did he come in January or February or March or April or May or even June? No. He landed on the third of July, and we have recently celebrated the tercentenary of his landing. All this shows that the Gulf of St. Lawrence was looked on as far more dangerous to navigation than Hudson bay. Now, I think I have shown that Hudson bay is open. The next thing is to show how to get out;