

Select Committee on the *Hudson's Bay Company*.

1857.

P A P E R S.

EXTRACT from the REPORT from 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. 1749.

To the Right Honourable the Lords of a Committee of His Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council. Appendix, No. _____

May it please Your Lordships,

In humble obedience to your Lordships' Order in Council of the 4th of February last, representing that, by an Order in Council, bearing date the 26th day of January last, there was referred to your Lordships the humble petition of Arthur Dobbs, esq., and the rest of the Committee appointed by the subscribers for finding out a passage to the Western and Southern Ocean of America, for themselves and the other adventurers; and that your Lordships, having taken the said petition into consideration, were pleased to refer the same to us, to consider thereof, and report our opinion thereupon to your Lordships.

Which petition sets forth, that the petitioners, in the year 1746, did, at their own costs and charges, fit out two ships upon an expedition in search of the north-west passage to the Western and Southern Ocean of America, in order to extend the trade, and increase the wealth and power of Great Britain, by finding out new countries and nations to trade with, as well in the great north-western continent of America, beyond Hudson's Bay, as in countries still farther distant, and hitherto unknown to the Europeans; and also to many large and populous islands in that great Western Ocean.

That the petitioners, by means of the said expedition, have made several discoveries of bays, inlets, and coasts, before unknown, and have a reasonable prospect of finding a passage to the Southern Ocean, by sea, although the discovery may not be perfected without repeated trials, upon account of the difficulties and danger of searching different unknown inlets and straits, and failing through new seas, and of procuring men of resolution, capacity, and integrity, to pursue it effectually.

That the petitioners find that the reward of 20,000 *l.*, given by Parliament, is not adequate to the expense the adventurers must be at to perfect the discovery, they having already expended above half that sum in their late expedition.

That the petitioners find that, upon a former attempt, his Majesty's predecessor King Charles the Second, as a suitable encouragement, granted a Royal Charter to the Governor and Company of Adventurers in England trading to Hudson's Bay, making them a body corporate for ever, upon their petition, setting forth that they had, at their own proper costs and charges, made an expedition to discover a new passage into the South Sea, and for finding some trade of furs, mines, and other commodities; and gave them the sole property of all the lands they should discover, together with an exclusive trade to all the countries within Hudson's Straits, not in possession of any of his subjects or of any other Christian power, with the royalties of mines, minerals, gems, and royal fish, to enable them to find out the passage, extend the trade, and to plant the countries they should discover, paying two elks and two black beavers, whenever and as often as his Majesty and his successors should enter their territories; granting to them the greatest privileges as lords proprietors, saving only their faith and allegiance to the Crown of Great Britain.

The petitioners beg leave to observe, that the said Company have not since effectually, or in earnest, searched for the said passage, but have rather endeavoured to conceal the same, and to obstruct the discovery thereof by others; nor have they made any new discovery either upon the coast, or in the inland countries adjoining to Hudson's Bay, since the grant of their charter; nor have they taken possession of or occupied any of the lands granted to them, or extended their trade into the inland parts of the adjoining continent; nor made any plantations or settlements, except four factories, and one small trading-house, in all which they have maintained, in time of peace, about 120 persons, servants to the Company; nor have they allowed any other of His Majesty's subjects to plant, settle, or trade in any of