

about two seasons he would understand exactly what that meant. In my opinion it was a very poor argument in support of his case because it proved that the bay was full of ice at the time both these steamers attempted to get in. While one was jammed in the ice, the other vessel, perhaps on account of pressure of wind from a certain direction making a lead in the ice, was enabled to get through. I have under my hand some photographs taken of Hudson bay, showing ice conditions there, from 1911 to 1915, and if any hon. gentleman thinks that the Hudson bay route is feasible for ordinary steamers, then after looking at these photographs I am confident he will change his opinion. In every one of these photographs where the Minto, the Acadia, the Bonaventure and the Boethic are trying to get through the ice, it will be observed that this ice is not merely five or six inches thick, but extends to a thickness of ten or twelve feet, and it is impossible for any steamers to get through such a solid obstruction without a great deal of difficulty.

Mr. KNOX: Has the hon. member never seen conditions of the same kind in the straits of Belle Isle?

Mr. DUFF: Yes. If my hon. friend and I could this afternoon travel by aeroplane to the Isle-au-Bois, in the straits of Belle Isle we would find the channel completely blocked with ice. If we went down to Quebec this afternoon we would find there that although the lower reaches of the St. Lawrence right down to the straits are blocked with ice, at Quebec it is possible for any vessel to get part way to Montreal by working her way through what is known as drift ice. So although a ship may be able to navigate a way through the ice flows, out in the mouth of the strait near Button island and cape Chidley practically throughout the whole year the ice blocks that strait. It is quite true that after a southwestern gale when the wind blows at a high velocity for four or five days the ice is shoved away over to the northeastern side, and if a vessel arrives at that particular time she is able to work her way into Hudson strait and reach the bay.

My hon. friend from Nelson said that if this railway was completed and the terminals built the farmers of the West would be a thousand miles nearer their market than they are at the present time. That is quite true so far as distance is concerned but he forgot to take into consideration the fact that even if steamers were able to get into the bay and take aboard their cargoes they would be two or three days longer navigating out past cape Chidley, even

if there was little or no ice. The captains would not navigate their ships after dark fearing ice conditions. Consequently there would be so much more time taken in navigating the passage which would offset the saving in distance. I might say that the photographs to which I referred were taken during the months of July and August, right in the height of the season when if this route was at all feasible there would be no ice in the bay or the strait yet every one of these photographs shows a heavy field of ice covering practically the whole of the bay.

The hon. member for Nelson said that if they could get the railway built to Hudson bay and the terminals constructed a route would be established between Hudson bay and Europe which would be a great thing for the western country. I do not think it would make very much difference. If parliament and the government decided to complete this road and make a test of this route, what would we have to do? In the first place, after the railway had reached Port Nelson, which it has been acknowledged here is better than Fort Churchill for the purpose of terminal facilities, it would be necessary to construct there docks and terminals. I am told by men with whom I have talked, and who have worked in Hudson bay for several seasons on the dredges, that it is practically impossible to get proper dockage facilities at that place, and for several reasons. The first reason is that although \$6,000,000 has been spent practically all on dredging at Port Nelson, yet to-day there is very little if any more water there than there was when the dredging started. It is also a well-known fact that it would be necessary to build miles of terminals, not miles in width but in length, because the water at Port Nelson where the railway is supposed to end is very shallow. The result is that perhaps miles of dockage would require to be constructed. That would take a large sum of money.

But even when these docks were constructed I am told that the current coming down the Nelson river is so strong and the velocity of the wind in Hudson bay so high most of the time, that it would be practically impossible to hold these vessels to the dock for loading and unloading except in very unusual weather for that part of the country. My hon. friend perhaps knows himself that in Hudson bay we hardly ever get summer breezes. The wind blows at a terrific rate of speed practically every day, and what with the strong current coming down the Nelson river and the wind and undertow from the northwest blowing across these docks where the steamers would