

EVIDENCE OF COMMANDER WILLIAM WAKEHAM, OF THE CANADIAN FISHERIES PROTECTION SERVICE, GIVEN BEFORE THE SELECT COMMITTEE, APRIL 5, 1907.

Commander Wakeham explained that he was in 1897 commissioned by the Dominion government, Sir Louis Davies being then Minister of Marine and Fisheries, to proceed to Hudson bay. His instructions were to go into the straits as early as he could and force his way into Hudson bay, to make a number of trips backwards and forwards during the season, and to remain there as late as he could during the fall, with safety.

The department chartered the sealing vessel *Diana* from Messrs. Jobs, of Newfoundland, for the purpose of the trip. It had been the intention of the witness, and the minister's intention, that the expedition should get away about May 20, but the *Diana* got stuck in the ice at the seal fisheries, and did not turn up in time to let them off that early, and it was June 3 before she left Halifax.

From Halifax they went out through the straits of Belle-Isle, and there the *Diana* got stuck in the ice, and it was June 22 before she got off the mouth of Hudson strait. At two or three points they tried to get in to the mainland, to get an interpreter to interpret with the Esquimaux, but they could never get through the pack, and arrived off the mouth of Hudson strait, about sixty miles off, without having succeeded. They kept along the edge of the pack all the way, and got there as the tail end of the pack coming from Baffin's bay and Smith's sound, and the ice that comes from Greenland, passed down. On June 22, they were able to steam sixty miles into the strait through loose open ice that almost any vessel could have gone through, but not as rapidly as the *Diana* did, perhaps because she drove right at it. Almost any vessel could have got through.

Inside the strait they found open water, and thought they were going to have no difficulty in getting through. Everything looked clear ahead, until they came up in the neighbourhood of the Saddle islands, and met with a barrier of solid, heavy ice. They turned round and followed it, looking for an opening, and followed it all the way across the straits. The witness had not had a great deal of experience with ice of that kind, but any one could see that there was no use attempting to go into a pack of that solidity.

However, he had with him a gentleman representing the interests of Manitoba and the Northwest, Mr. Fisher, of Winnipeg, and he was anxious that something should be done. The witness posted backwards and forwards across the front of the barricade looking for an opening, and did not find any. It was drift ice that had been blown there, probably by an east wind. It was a regular wall. Mr. Fisher became impatient and thought the witness ought to do something towards forcing his way into it. Eventually witness said, 'Well, all right, here goes,' looked for a soft spot, and forced the ship in.

As a result, the *Diana* was jammed from June 23 until about July 9 or 10. They were badly jammed, and the ship nipped, and all hands got ready to leave her on two or three occasions. That was on July 9 and 10. They had worse jams on July 4. However, the wind changed and the ice began to go abroad, and they got out of it by steaming to the southward.

Commander Wakeham explained that if he were to go there again, he would not attempt, no matter who urged him, to go into a pack of that kind. He thought he lost time by doing it. If he had remained off the large pack, cruising about until it went