

Commodore Markham in Hudson's Bay.

The members and friends of the Royal Geographical Society met at Burlington House on June 11, under the presidency of Sir Henry Barkly, to hear a paper by Commodore A. H. Markham on the subject of "Hudson's Bay and Hudson's Strait as a Navigable Channel." The author being out of the country, the paper was read by the secretary. Commodore Markham began by describing Hudson's Bay as a large inland sea well outside the Arctic zone, about 1,000 miles in length, north to south, and some 600 miles wide, covering an area of something like 500,000 square miles. The bay was remarkably free from rocks, and its soundings were exceedingly uniform, the average depth being about 70 fathoms. Storms were very rare and by no means formidable, icebergs were never seen, and fogs were of rare occurrence and of but short duration. The climate on the shores of the bay was, during the summer months, mild and genial, and it was asserted that the temperature of the water was no less than 14 degs. Higher than that of the water of Lake Superior. The principal and, as far as was known at present, the only practicable approach to Hudson's Bay in a ship was through Hudson's Strait—a deep channel about 500 miles in length. The strait had an average breadth of about 100 miles, but in the narrowest part it was only 45 miles broad. The sounding in the strait varied from 150 to 300 fathoms, and it was wonderfully free from shoals and rocks. The paper then went on to describe the voyagers to Hudson's Bay from the time of the early navigators down to the present date. Continuing, it referred to the desire of the people of the North-West to have a seaport on the shores of Hudson's Bay, and to secure the construction of a railroad to connect such a port with Winnipeg or some other convenient depot on the new Canadian Pacific Railroad. This achievement would result in shortening the distance of transport for the export of produce by one half, with a corresponding reduction in the expense. The only obstacle to the establishment of the desired port was the belief in the formidable character of the ice that would, as it was said, have to be encountered in Hudson's Strait, and the consequent limited duration of the navigable season. Commodore Markham said the result of all the experience gathered from voyagers during two centuries, and from observations at the stations, was that Hudson's Strait was perfectly navigable and free from ice in August and later in the season. It was to be remembered that the passage had been successfully accomplished nearly every year for the last 200 years, while the vessels that had been employed on the service had been ordinary sailing ships, dependent entirely upon wind and weather. It was very rare, indeed, that they had failed to get through, and still more rare that any of them had been destroyed by the ice. Steam had robbed ice navigation of many of its difficulties and dangers, and it was only fair to assume that, with the appliances that science had revealed, as much could be accomplished at the present day as had been accomplished by Hudson, Baffin, Button, and Luke Fox in their rude and poorly-equipped fly boats. The vessels to be employed on this service should be specially constructed to resist ordinary ice pressure, and should be able to steam from 10 to 12 knots at least.—*Colonies and India.*



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17 50	94	Rapid City	9 45
18 30 119 30 21 49	115 133 155	Shoal Lake Hirtle Hinscarth	9 20 13 20 6 20
23 00	166	Russell	5 00
23 15 ARRIVE	189	Langenburg	4 45 LEAVE

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