

Last session there was some reference to the only casualty that I know of on the Hudson Bay, namely the loss of the steamer Bright Fan. That ship, as honourable members know, came in contact with an iceberg. I want to read a short extract from the report of the Royal Commission which was appointed to investigate the disaster.

Q. Was a good and proper look-out maintained on board at all times after leaving Churchill?

A. No. The court thinks that a proper look-out was not kept on the Bright Fan. There was no expressly appointed look-out and for some minutes before the collision with the iceberg apparently the only person on the ship who had any opportunity of seeing the approach of danger was the helmsman, an apprentice of 18 years of age.

I think that proves beyond all doubt that the loss of the ship was entirely due to carelessness. Let us be as generous as we may, it seems to me that is the only reasonable explanation of the disaster.

When dealing last session with the navigability of the Hudson Bay route my honourable friend from De Lanaudière (Hon. Mr. Casgrain) advocated the use of a certain kind of boats, known as saucer bottoms. I do not know whether any boats of that build have ever navigated the Hudson Bay, but my honourable friend's idea seemed to be that if such a boat came in contact with floating ice the boat could climb up on top and use the ice as a common carrier. He might have extended this idea and suggested that these vessels climb on top of any icebergs that they happened to meet, and use them also as common carriers.

On the question of navigability I quoted Captain Bernier last session. I very much regret that I have mislaid a letter I received from him last Christmas, with which he enclosed a copy of one which by order of the King had been forwarded to him when he was in England last year, commending his work in northern regions. His statement which I quoted last year was that the Hudson Bay was navigable practically all the year round. I am not going to stress that point.

My honourable friend from De Lanaudière also said last year, with regard to the selection of Port Nelson, that sailors should be consulted in preference to engineers about harbours and navigation. At page 453 of Hansard of last year I find these words of his:

The great trouble with governments is that they insist upon consulting engineers about harbours and navigation. When it comes to building wharves, superintending dredging, or something of that sort, engineers are very useful; but when we want to know about the navigability of waters adjacent to a certain

port we ought to consult sea captains and sailormen, who know something about navigation.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN: Yes, sailormen.

Hon. Mr. GILLIS: That is exactly the kind of men I am going to quote. I have already referred to Captain Bernier's statement. Now may I quote what was said by Captain Gofton, of the steamship Pennyworth, the first boat to arrive at Churchill last season. He has sailed frequently into the ports of Montreal and Vancouver, but this was his first trip to Churchill. He was very favourably impressed by the Hudson Bay route. The following is an extract from a newspaper story referring to his impressions:

"I would much rather navigate Hudson Strait and Hudson Bay than the St. Lawrence," he said, and is so reporting to his company. "The seaway is safer and aids to navigation are in the main satisfactory."

He believes that, on this year's showing, the insurance season should be made longer, for the Pennyworth encountered only about 14 icebergs, few growlers and no loose ice.

So he did not have any loose ice to carry his ship along.

He suggests one more wireless station in the strait, preferably on Digge's Island, in order to perfect direction-finding, and also a fog siren and a whistle buoy in Churchill harbour. The aid rendered by the ice-breaker ship, McLean, he termed splendid. Since the Pennyworth is equipped with a gyro compass and electrical sounding apparatus, the uselessness of the magnetic compass in the strait was offset. The amount of ice seen was less than that encountered on the Belle Isle route to Montreal, and the only difficulty experienced during the whole trip was that caused Saturday night and Sunday by heavy fog over Hudson Bay.

He sees a great future for the Hudson Bay route as a grain shipping line at a rate of two shillings and ninepence per 80 bushels, and for imports into Western Canada and the far western States.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN: Eight bushels, not eighty.

Hon. Mr. GILLIS: Eighty. May I quote another representative of the class which my honourable friend said should be consulted about harbours and navigation? The Captain of the steamship Brandon says:

Western Canada's first experimental shipment of cattle over the Hudson Bay route has demonstrated that physically the Churchill way is at no physical disadvantage when compared with the Montreal route.

"I would sooner sail the Hudson Bay route to England than the Montreal route," declared Capt. John Begg, D.S.C., master of the S.S. Brandon, the largest ship ever to enter Churchill. His explanation was simple. Churchill is a natural harbour with plenty of deep water, good dock facilities and low harbour dues. The pilot is on the ship not