

cock, Wilson, Davidson, Cyr, the Hon. Mr. Brown and the Hon. Mr. Miller. On page 14 of the report of this committee we find the following:

1. Captain James Hackland has been employed by Hudson Bay Company 39 years. First navigated Hudson bay in 1843, and was in command of Hudson Bay Company's schooner for 16 years from that time.

He says, 'the straits are open all the year round, never freezes; there is no reason why steamships should not navigate the straits at any time. The navigation of Hudson bay is not considered dangerous. There are no shoals, there are few fogs. During that sixteen years, navigation was never impeded by fog.'

Page 16:

2. Walter Dickson was twenty years in the employ of the Hudson Bay Company, from 1853 to 1873. I lived for thirteen years on the coast of Hudson bay, and for seven years in the interior between James bay and Lake Superior. I have had an opportunity of gaining information respecting Hudson straits from my long acquaintance with Esquimaux who reside about the straits, and from my personal observation of the bay itself. I have every reason to believe that the Hudson straits and a great body of the bay proper, are navigable at all seasons of the year and afford no peculiar difficulty to ordinary navigation.

To Manitoba and the Northwest, the route via Hudson bay is very important, giving them a shorter and cheaper route for both export and import than can possibly be had by any other route. I believe that Hudson straits are never frozen over in winter. My reasons are first, that the latitude is not too high; second, that the current and tide are too strong to allow of a general freezing over at any time.

Page 18:

3. That the Esquimaux make use of skin boats for ordinary hunting and travelling purposes in winter, and during a residence of thirteen years amongst them, I never heard of any Esquimaux crossing the straits on the ice. Icebergs, properly so-called, are not formed in Hudson bay and straits, nor can they get there so far as I am aware. The nature of the ice found in Hudson bay is shore ice, generally from 2½ to 3 feet thick, and at many places along the coast is porous at all seasons.

To my knowledge, there have been fewer losses or disasters to shipping in Hudson bay and straits than any known route of travel during the past 250 years. I do not know the rate of insurance, but believe it to be less than the average. I believe the Hudson Bay Company have ceased to insure their vessels, deeming the route so safe as not to call for it. Hudson bay is less subject to storms than the great lakes.

Page 19:

From what I have observed of the movements of ice in the Hudson bay during the summers I passed there, I am perfectly as-

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sured that an ordinary iron screw steamer would never have any difficulty in getting through or around that which is usually met with in the bay and straits. The chief reason why the old sailing vessels of the Hudson Bay Company often met with detention in the ice was that at the season when floe ice is met with, there is generally very little wind, and sailing vessels are consequently as helpless amongst the ice as they would be in a dead calm in the centre of the Atlantic or elsewhere. Hudson bay has always been found of easy access to a good and careful navigator.

Page 27:

Dr. Bell obtained from the company's offices in London, a record, which, printed in his report, shows the date of arriving and sailing of their vessels at York Factory for ninety-three years, and at Moose Port for 147 years. These lists show that in some years, several vessels were sent in charge of Britishmen-of-war, and there has been almost every year during the past two centuries, ships of various classes and sizes navigating the strait without loss, and it seems almost incredible that such a number of voyages could be made, extending over 274 years without the loss of over one, or as is claimed by some writers, two small sailing vessels.

Page 28:

It is but a comparatively short time since it was claimed that it would be impossible to navigate the St. Lawrence with steamships.

Page 29:

The lower St. Lawrence, notwithstanding its comparative narrowness, is partly open even in the middle of the winter. But the difficulty, as in the case of Hudson bay, in the apparent impossibility of getting into the harbours. Harbours, such as Churchill or York on the Hudson bay, would have the advantage over Quebec or Montreal of connecting directly with the open sea, and hence, in autumn, vessels would not be so liable to be frozen in, as occasionally happens in the St. Lawrence, as for example, in the autumn of 1880, also in the autumn of 1870, when the outward bound shipping got frozen in below Quebec, occasioning a loss, it is said, of over a million dollars.

Page 46:

James Hargrave was at the Factory on Hudson bay from 1867 to 1871 in the employ of the Hudson Bay Company. Have heard the captains of vessels and sailors say that the Hudson straits are navigable all the year round.

Page 47:

President of the Northwest Navigation Company, Winnipeg, says, 'I am interested in the carrying out of the Hudson Bay scheme, and during the time I was in England in January last, I conversed with many persons in Liverpool and London as to the project. I also met in London, some gentlemen from Berlin and conversed with them. The opinion of all with whom I conversed was that the straits and bay were navigable for powerful steamers all the year round.'