

the Erie Canal and down to the Hudson River—that beautiful river whose banks are now lined by the handsome villas of the wealthy and cultured people of the United States. Now hardy Canadians are called upon to develop a route for the trade and traffic of this northern country by the northern estuary which bears his name. In bringing this matter before you, hon. gentleman, I will confine myself to certain facts in order that you may draw your own conclusions from them as to the practicability of navigating Hudson Bay. I will take first of all Mr. Gordon's report, and I may say that so far as that report is concerned I consider it as one which was made by an officer who felt that he had the responsibility of a Government upon his shoulders, so far as his statement was concerned, and who felt the necessity of extreme caution in any statements he might make that would have the effect of introducing capital into or keeping it out of the country, so far as this route was concerned, and, therefore, I consider his report was a conservative and cautious one, made after having withdrawn from all the posts of observations placed there for two consecutive years and after he had wound up all the work he was called upon to perform in the exploration of Hudson Bay, in the two vessels the "Neptune" and the "Alert." In his final report he says that in his opinion the navigation of the strait was practicable and available for three months in the year, and possibly four months—from the 15th July to the 15th October—that the first fortnight in July and the last fortnight in October the navigation might be available, but it was risky and doubtful. As I have explained, his report is surrounded with all the caution that a gentleman occupying the position that he did should have observed. We have another report here from one of his observers, a Mr. Tyrrell. It is in the shape of an official report. What he has stated appears in the report of Lieutenant Gordon, and is used in combatting the arguments of a gentleman who was opposing the practicability of navigating Hudson Bay. In a letter to the press, among other things he says:—

"From observations taken at Ashe Inlet, where the channel is narrower than at any other place, and hence where ice jams are most likely to occur, I found nothing to interfere with navigation during the months of July, August, September and October, and that for

another month vessels would, with the chance of some delay, be able to make their trips."

That is his evidence; and he was an officer who had spent a year at Ashe Inlet and who is giving his opinion as a private individual, living in Hamilton at the time he wrote this letter. He further goes on to say there would be no unusual danger in navigating those straits at full speed from four to five months in the year. Further, it is mentioned in his report that the steamer "Arctic," one of the whaling steamers that comes from Boston annually, entered the straits by Ashe Inlet on the 5th of June and tied up to the ice in front of the post and reported that they had come in on the 5th of June without any obstruction. The steamer "Arctic" passed into Hudson Bay and went on with its fishing expedition and went out of Hudson Bay on the 2nd week of June without meeting with any mishap, and for aught I know has been doing the same thing from year to year ever since. From that it is clear to my mind that to a properly equipped steamer the navigation of the straits is practicable for a longer period than we have been accustomed to believe in the past. I will take another report, that of Capt. Markham, an able officer, who has his professional reputation at stake, and who was invited by the Hudson Bay Railway Company, to whom the Government had given a promise to send two officers, to accompany the expedition, in order that they might make a report for their own private information. Capt. Markham was one of those officers invited by the president of the Hudson Bay Railway Company, and he went on the steamer "Alert" and made the trip in the year 1886. He has made most voluminous remarks in the report upon the question, not only to the president of the Hudson Bay Railway Company, but in the English magazines, and by reading papers before the Geographical Society in London. But I will confine myself, merely, so far as his report is concerned, to this one point:—

"Looking at it from a perfectly impartial point of view, and having very carefully considered the matter in all its bearings, it appears to be an incontrovertible fact that the establishment of a sea port, some 800 miles nearer to Winnipeg than Montreal (the nearest port at which goods can now be shipped and transhipped), must be of the greatest possible value and importance to the extensive wheat-bearing and cattle-producing country which claims Winnipeg as its commercial centre."