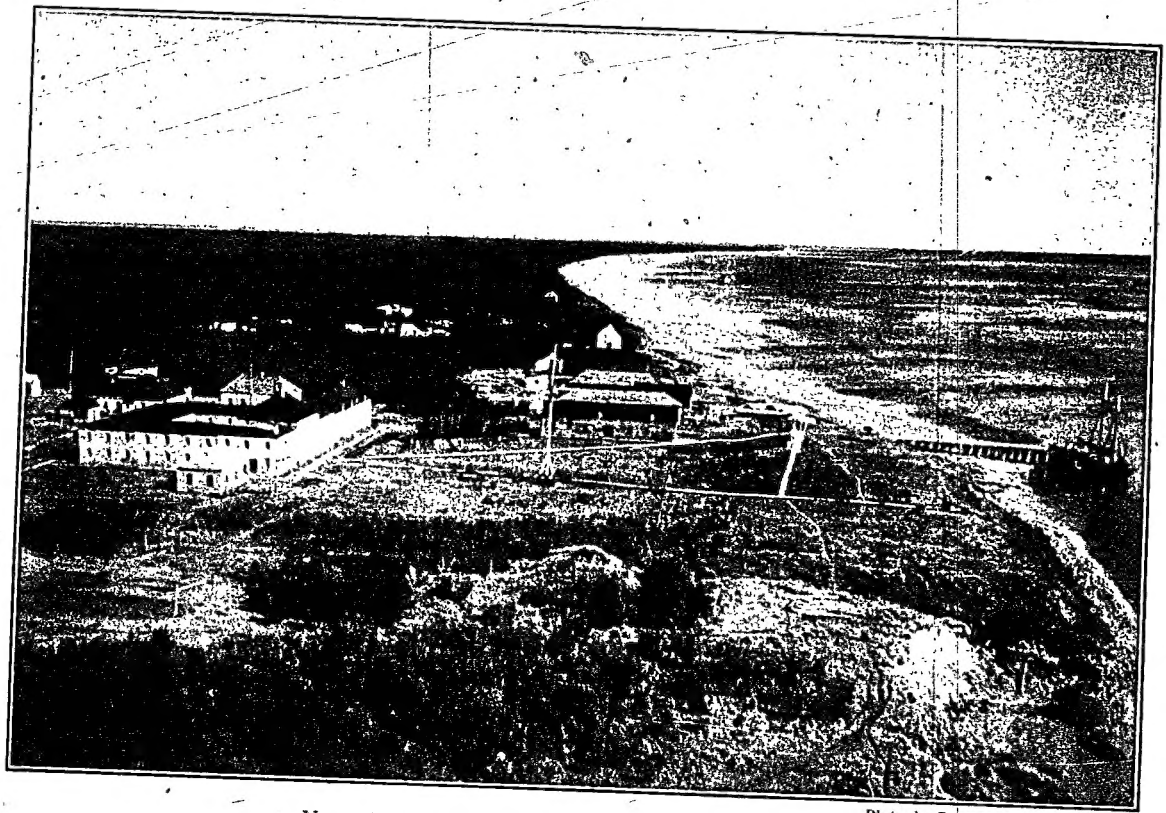

YORK FACTORY AND HAYES RIVER, LOOKING SEAWARD

Photo. by Royal Canadian Air Force.

The Fort of Jérémie's Gate was half a mile below the present site.

Twenty Years of York Factory
1694 - 1714

JÉRÉMIE'S ACCOUNT OF HUDSON STRAIT AND BAY

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH EDITION OF 1720
WITH NOTES AND INTRODUCTION

BY

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OTTAWA
THORBURN AND ABBOTT
1926

WM. TYRRELL & CO.

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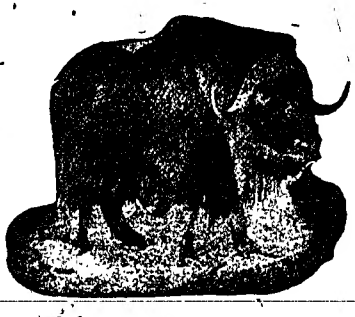


INTRODUCTION

THE Account of Hudson Strait and Bay by Jérémie was first published in French in the year 1720. It appeared in the sixth volume of a collection of northern voyages published at Amsterdam by Jean Frederic Bernard. Although much quoted by both French and English writers it has not before been published in English.

Jérémie indicates in his narrative that he was in the employ of a fur trading company, but he does not mention it by name. It was the Compagnie du Nord which, while it had been active for some years previously, first received a charter in 1685.[1] This company had been formed by Quebec merchants to exploit the northern fur trade, but it soon took on the national aspects which were inseparable from commerce in that region and in those years, and it became the representative of French interests in the contest for Hudson bay, just as the Hudson's Bay Company, originally formed as a purely commercial venture, became representative of the British side.

The narrative is addressed to "Monsieur", but we are not given any direct information as to his identity. From the general tone of the narrative the person addressed was some one in a position of influence, and held in esteem by Jérémie. Two references in the text may afford some clue to identity. The first occurs when Jérémie is describing the musk-ox. He offers to send enough wool to his correspondent to have a trial made of it by skilful workmen. This would indicate that he was writing to some one in France. Again, when he was unable, on his return from France in 1708, to

1. Formed on the report of Louis Jolliet, on his return from the bay in 1679, that unless the French exerted themselves the English would, within 6 years, have all the commerce of Canada attracted to the bay. E. Gagnon: "Louis Jolliet", Chap. XI.

enter Hudson strait owing to contrary winds, and had to winter at Placentia in Newfoundland, Jérémie writes: "And from there I had the honour of writing to you for permission to get stores in Canada, and you were good enough to give your consent." There would not have been time to correspond with France, and the request would indicate that his correspondent was some local authority able to sanction removal of stores from Canada, or was a superior officer of the Compagnie du Nord. In either case he was in Canada in that year.

The name of Antoine Denis Raudot (1679-1737) suggests itself as possibly the name of the unknown correspondent. He came to Canada in 1705 as assistant with his father Jacques Raudot (1647-1728), the Intendant. The son was recalled to France in 1710, a year before his father. Both father and son had a real solicitude for the advancement of New France, and the son was director of the Compagnie des Indes.

Regarding Jérémie himself very little is known. Abbe A. Rhéaume has identified him, seemingly correctly, as Nicolas Jérémie, born at Québec in 1669, [2] the fourth of the eleven children of Noel Jérémie de la Montagne and Jeanne Peltier who were married at Quebec in 1659. [3] In becoming a fur trader the son followed his father who saw service in the trade in the Saguenay, and who died there in 1697. [4] Charlevoix, in his History of New France, mentions that he had met Jérémie, and says that he was a very honest man and an accomplished traveller, and that his account of Hudson strait and bay is very instructive and judiciously written. This meeting must have occurred in 1709 when Jérémie was returning from France to Fort Bourbon. Charlevoix, at that time, was a young teacher in the Jesuit College at Quebec. Jérémie married a Montagnais in 1693, but this marriage was later annulled. Rhéaume states that he married a second time at Québec on 20 February 1708, but no record of such marriage occurs in the registers, and at that date Jérémie was in France. He died at Quebec in October 1732, aged 63 years, his burial being recorded on the 19th of that month. [5]

2. Bulletin des Recherches Historiques, August 1903.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid. March 1907.
5. Ibid. August 1903.

Few of those who lived in the region of York Fort in its early years have left any writings. Radisson wrote to some extent, but he is concerned mostly about his personal adventures and in defence of himself, although, had he wished to do so, he could have given much information about the country. Groseilliers has left nothing, and possibly on that account Radisson has been given undue prominence in accounts of their joint activities. La Potherie gives some geographical notes, but they are not accurate. Gabriel Marest, the scholarly chaplain to d'Iberville's expedition in 1694, who remained a year at the fort, has left an account of his voyage and of the capture of the fort, but does not seem to have acquired facts about topography.[6] The early English residents did not publish anything until we come to Robson's time. Jérémie's narrative, in many respects stands almost alone, and is the best record we have, made by a resident, of what was known about that country more than 200 years ago.

Jérémie's summary of history prior to his arrival is confused, most of it apparently collected by himself from oral reports. It is noticeable he makes no allusion to the journey supposed to have been made by Kelsey, though that journey would have started from York only three years before Jérémie arrived. Distinction should be made between his account of events before his time, and of matters coming more under his own observation. He was earnest in his endeavour to collect all possible information about the resources of the region. To him we owe the first published reference to the musk-ox, and also to the copper found in the north, the extent of which has not even yet been ascertained. His narrative is never uninteresting, as is indeed evidenced by the widespread manner in which it has been quoted by subsequent writers. His geographical notes are surprisingly accurate, and show painstaking enquiry of the Indians who came from distant points to trade. He states that he even did all in his power to persuade the Indians to explore towards the unknown western sea, and that he had questioned prisoners of distant tribes brought expressly to him by the nearer Indians. His remarks on topography and resources are so interesting, and his notes on history so confused, that one could wish he had replaced the latter by more extended reference to the country itself.

6. Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses. Paris, 1713.

Nothing definite is known as to the circumstances under which Jérémie wrote. There are remarks in his narrative which are not easily explained unless we assume he wrote them while actually at Fort Bourbon, and it may be that a large part was written there, in the form of notes or letters, and that he assembled all later. He states he had been in Quebec four or five months previously, at which time he had an interview with Bégon, the Intendant, and also that he purposed paying a visit to Canada, from which he would return. His narrative must have been written, or completed, in Europe some time between 1714 and 1720. He was an observer and trader rather than writer, and his literary style is crude, and little effort has been made at arrangement, so that he has often to recall himself from some by-path down which he has strayed. The translation has not been easy, but endeavour has been made to combine accurate representation with adherence to good English.

York Fort and Factory,[7] where Jérémie spent the years of his sojourn in Hudson bay, was situate in his time, as now, on the northwesterly bank of Hayes river, though its aspect as fort has long since passed away. The whole estuary at the mouths of Nelson and Hayes rivers was known both to the English and the French in those years as Port Nelson, and this has led to York fort being frequently, but erroneously, called Fort Nelson by modern writers when recounting its early history. This fact should be noted to avoid misunderstanding. Robson suggests that there was an ulterior motive in using the expression Port Nelson. "The company in their letter to Bridgar, 15 May 1682, order him to make a settlement on the river of Port Nelson. They also address several letters to the governor at Port Nelson, but the answers are all dated from York fort which was erected not upon Nelson, but on Hayes river, and therefore it is probable they hoped to lead the (House of Commons, 1749) committee into a belief that they had built a fort on Nelson river," (i.e. to secure its possession).[8]

There is no satisfactory record of the discovery of Hayes river. The early visits to the estuary of the two rivers, in connection with the fur trade, are outlined in the claims made in 1687 by the English and the French for the commissioners under the treaty of

7. "With all such forts there were factories established to take in furs." French claim, 1687. Can. Arch. 1883. p.192.

8. Robson. p. 71.

Neutrality of 1686.[9] These claims, on the English side, recount voyages made to Nelson river in 1669, 1673, 1680 and 1682. The French, in their reply, do not deny the English voyages, except that they never heard of the voyage of 1669, and that in 1682 they had "built a fort close to a place called Nelson, on the river of Bourbon," and that, on that occasion, the English arrived after them. The French fort referred to was on Hayes river. Both nations seem agreed that no establishment was made in either river before 1682, and that the first purely French expedition to the whole estuary was in that year.

It seems incredible that so many voyages should have been made to Nelson river before 1682 without learning of the existence of Hayes river, yet there is no record of any such knowledge before that year. Radisson states that he accompanied the H. B. Co. ship to Nelson river in 1669, and that Groseilliers went in 1670. It cannot be believed that these two explorers brought a ship from Quebec in 1682 to establish a post, and that they then opportunely discovered Hayes river, yet Radisson, in his affidavit of 23 August 1697, says: "In August 1682 arrived at a river to them (himself and companions) unknown, but being in the latitude of Port Nelson, resolved to go in."[10] And this is the only record as to discovery of Hayes river. It seems a reasonable conclusion that one of the two had heard of, or seen, Hayes river on his voyage with the H. B. Co. ship, and that they kept the knowledge to themselves.

As referred to by Jérémie, three independent parties arrived in 1682, Radisson and Groseilliers, associated with Quebec merchants, built on Hayes river, the others, the H. B. Co. and a Boston party, built on Nelson river. Whatever the details, the result, as given by Jérémie, was that the Quebec party obtained control of all the posts. In the following summer Radisson went to Quebec and France, leaving his nephew in charge of his Hayes river post. Dissatisfied with his treatment at both places, he again associated himself with the English company, with the inauguration of which, thirteen years earlier, he had much to do. In 1684 that company sent out an expedition, which Radisson accompanied, and he turned over his post to the company, the post having been moved, during his absence, to an island higher up Hayes river.

9. Can. Arch. 1883. pp. 173-201.
10. Radisson's affidavit is given in H. B. Memorial Bk. No. 701, p. 81.

The H. B. Co. now proceeded to build a post on Hayes river, the selection of which, in preference to Nelson river, may well be ascribed to Radisson. In his journal for 1684 he describes a trip made with the governor across the land from Nelson to Hayes river. "We had the pleasure of observing at our ease the beauty of the country on its banks with which the governor was charmed on account of the difference of these from the places he had seen on the Nelson river".[11] While this new fort was building, the H. B. Co. had a post on the north side of Nelson river.[12]

The French, ignorant, no doubt, of the loss of their post on Hayes river, "in 1684 fitted out two barques under command of Lamartinière. Having entered the river St. Therese (Hayes) they encountered a boat with five Englishmen. (Each side claimed the river). After an interview of six hours they agreed to prosecute their trade without troubling each other, and that Lamartiniere could pass their fort."[13] The French wintered in Gargousse river (modern French creek), and took away a cargo of furs next year.

Although the new H. B. Co. fort is called Hayes Fort[14] on Thornton's map of 1685, its official name became York almost at once. At least as early as 1687 it is so called in H. B. Co. State Papers, though, as already stated, it was frequently called the fort of Port Nelson in its early years. At the time the fort was built the contest between the English and the French traders was taking on a national aspect, the relations becoming more and more interwoven with the affairs of the two nations in other fields. Although it was a time of peace, it was not in human nature that clashes should be avoided. It would be a narrow view which could regard the traders' rivalry as based merely on commerce. Open hostilities broke out on the bay in 1686, when an overland expedition from Quebec captured three English forts in the southerly region, namely Rupert, Moose and Albany. Distances to Europe were so great that events on the bay overlapped events between the two nations. Compromise was attempted by the treaty of Neutrality in November 1686, presumably in ignorance of the capture of the three forts, and some understanding of joint occupancy of Port Nelson was reached.[15]

11. Can. Arch. 1895. p. 63.
12. See Radisson's journal. Can. Arch. 1895. pp. 39, 75.
13. N. Y. Hist. Coll. quoted by Mills, Ont. Bound. p. 105.
14. Hayes island fort was an earlier establishment in James bay.
15. Letter from Denonville, quoted by Lindsey, Ont. Bound. pp. 34, 134.

The French, however, wished to exchange the three forts for sole control of Port Nelson, but the English commissioners supported the H. B. Co. in claiming the whole bay and demanding the return of the forts. This the French refused, saying that they had been taken in reprisal for the loss of their post on Hayes river in 1684.[16]

War broke out in 1689, shortly after William III became king. York fort was attacked in 1691, but the governor, acting on instructions, burnt it and the merchandise sooner than have them fall into French hands. Next summer the fort was re-built, and fort Albany was re-taken in 1693, but even then the Hudson's Bay company had only these two forts in the bay, and the French at their posts were doing as big a trade. The great object of the French was to capture York. "This single fort, which remains in possession of the English, is of so much importance that the gain or loss of everything depends on it."[17] Ships were sent from France, and the renowned d'Iberville was given command. This was the expedition Jérémie accompanied, leaving Quebec on 10th August 1694, and he tells how the fort was captured, and how he remained as third in command when d'Iberville returned to France. For twenty years, except one year, from September 1696 to September 1697, the fort remained a French possession, and was known to them as Fort Bourbon.

There is doubt in regard to the particular feature in the locality to which the name Bourbon was first applied. Radisson, in his affidavit previously referred to, claims that "he gave the name Bourbon in 1682 to the said Port Nelson." The H. B. Co. practically confirm this in their statement of 1687 in which, while saying that their captain Newland had entered Port Nelson in 1669, they add, "Tis owned the ffrench came in the year 1682 to ye western coasts of Hudson's bay called by the Indians Kakiakioway, to which the name Bourbon was given on the spott."[18] Kakiakioway was Hayes river, to which indeed the French came, yet Radisson indicates that he applied the name Bourbon rather as his name for Port Nelson than specifically to Hayes river. Whatever the feature first so named, d'Iberville, in naming the captured fort, would have been only recalling a name first used in the locality by Radisson.

16. Can. Arch. 1883. pp. 185, 198.
17. Compagnie du Nord to Pontchartrain, 1693, quoted by Lindsey, p. 138.
18. Can. Arch. 1883. p. 186.

In 1696 York fort was re-taken by the English. In almost every case of an attack by cannon on a fort the advantage was with the attackers. Those within were more trader than soldier, while the reverse was the case when a ship had been sent out to attack a fort. Further the fort itself, admirable against Indians, was very liable to be set on fire by cannon. Robson, writing of York in 1745, says it "has not strength enough to resist a vigorous attack. The bringing only one six-pounder against it on the land side, where the batteries on the river could be of no service, would be sufficient to make the men surrender. The first ball might blow up the magazine." Jérémie was taken prisoner to England, with the rest of the garrison, and after four months there, he went to France and joined a new expedition against York. A sea fight occurred off Port Nelson on 6th September 1697, the details of which are obscure. Strange to say, there is no account, written on the British side, available, and the available accounts seem exaggerated and strangely at variance with British naval traditions. Whatever the details, the result was in favour of the French, and a few days later the fort surrendered again to d'Iberville, Again it reverted to its French name Fort Bourbon, and Jérémie took his place as second officer, later being appointed to command the fort. For sixteen years after this second capture the French held the fort, and then the treaty of Utrecht restored it to the British, and a pause occurred in the fight for the bay.

At the time of the treaty, Jérémie was not only in command of Fort Bourbon, but is referred to as "commander of the fforts and streights of Hudson," these commissions being, no doubt, the ones to which he refers as having been given him by the French king, none of his predecessors having anything similar. The transfer of the fort was in accordance with Art. X of the treaty, signed 31 March 1713 (O.S.). This article stated: "The said most Christian king will restore to the kingdom and queen of Great Britain, in full right to be possessed for ever, the bay and straits of Hudson, together with all lands, seas, (etc.), no places, whether of land or sea, looking towards the same, being excepted, which are now possessed by the subjects of France .... All which shall be well and truly delivered to British subjects having a commission from the Queen to demand and receive the same." Following the British contention that the bay belonged by right to England, the British authorities "did not think fit to receive any act of cession, and instead

they have named the H. B. Co. as the people to take over possession. By this means the title of the company is acknowledged."[19]

As related by Jérémie, a ship from his company had reached Fort Bourbon in 1713. This ship is referred to in the memorial of Neret, Gayot and Co. of Paris, July 1713: "The persons concerned in the trade of Hudson's bay sent out in the month of June of the present year, 1713, their ship the Providence, loaded with merchandize .... and ordered their commander of the places to prepare all things for the evacuation thereof .... and to send them an inventory of all that shall remain (i.e. what was not sent back in the Providence), that they may agree with the English about the same, as well as for the passage of the commander and hired servants."[20]

In the following year, 1714, the British frigate, Union, captain Harley, took out Governor Knight of the Hudson's Bay Co. and J. B. Cullerier, representative of the French company. Knight carried an order, signed by the French king and countersigned by Phélipeaux, and addressed to Jérémie: "By the King. Mr. Jérémie, commander of the fforts and streight of Hudson, is commanded to deliver to the bearers of the queen of Great Britain's order the bay and streights of Hudson, together with all buildings and fforts there erected in the condition they now are, with all the cannon and cannon ball, as also a quantity of powder, if it be there found, in proportion to the cannon ball, and other things belonging to the artillery, according to our execution of the tenth article of the peace concluded at Utrecht, the 11th day of April last. Done at Marley the sixth of August 1713."[21] The letter from Phélipeaux, comte de Pontchartrain, to which Jérémie also refers, is dated 9 August 1713, and states that the king had directed him to signify to Jérémie that he should carry out the order. Neret, Gayot and Co., who appear to have been agents, also wrote to him under date 11 August, saying: "In the English ship by which you receive this letter you will return to Europe, where we will take care to furnish you with what necessarys you shall have occasion for."[22] It is remarkable that in no document dealing with Jérémie's official career has his Christian name, or even an initial, been found. He is

19. Dartmouth's letter to Lds. of Trade, 27 May 1713.
20. Can Arch. H. B. Memorial Bk. No. 701. p. 274.
21. Can. Arch. M. 394. B. p. 174.
22. Can. Arch. H. B. Memorial Bk. No. 701. p. 279.

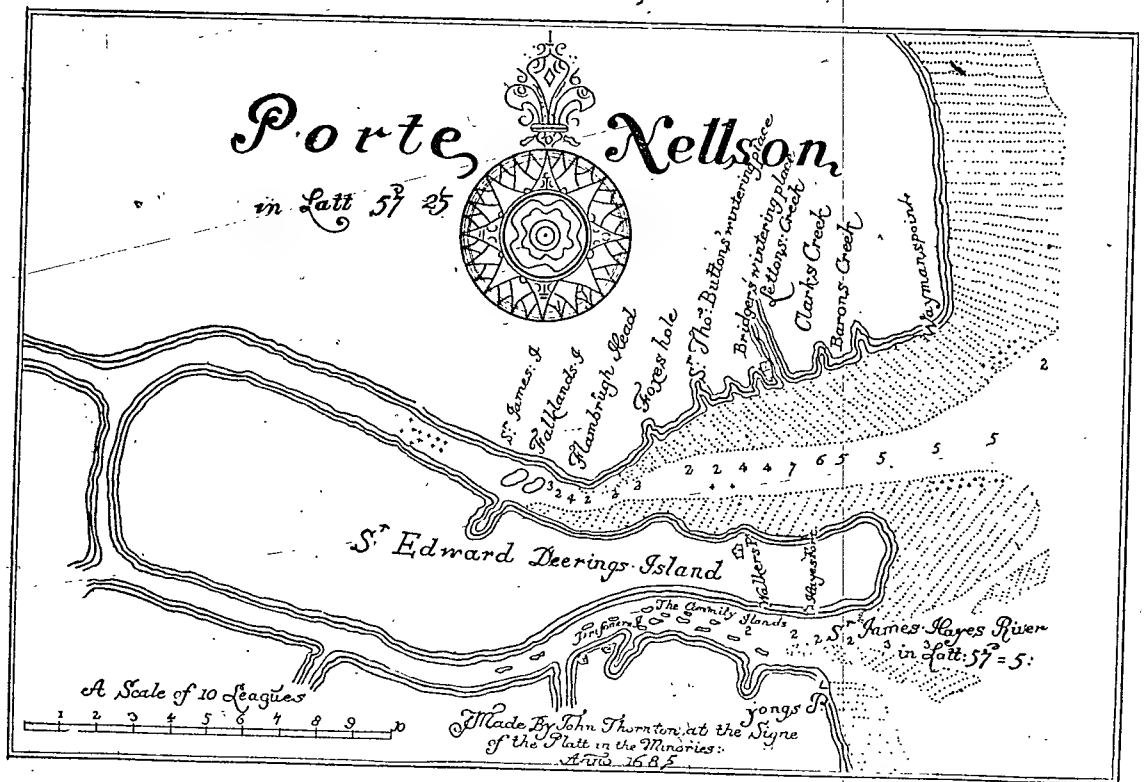
addressed as Monsieur Jérémie, more rarely as Jérémie de la Montagne, the latter being his signature to the inventory of articles at Fort Bourbon which he made out 20 September 1713. Even on the title page of his narrative he is called Monsieur Jérémie.

Jérémie's return is also indirectly referred to in the memorial of the H. B. Co. to the Lords of Trade, dated 4 August 1714: "Pursuant to the treaty they did the beginning of June last send a ship for Hudson's bay . . . . which ,at the request of the Canada company is not only to bring the French, but likewise their effects, they paying freight for the same, which ship may be expected the latter end of September."[23] Apart from the publication of his narrative in 1720, no subsequent record of his activities has been found. There are some remarks in the narrative which would suggest that Jérémie was familiar with nautical matters, and it may be that, after he left Fort Bourbon, he was occupied with the transport service between France and Canada.

There was probably little, if any, change in the site of York fort between the date it was first founded and the time, ten years later, when Jérémie reached there. He does not refer to any change in the twenty year period to 1714, and only thirty one years later Robson surveyed the site, so that his survey should closely agree with the fort of Jérémie's time. La Perouse, in 1782, destroyed the fort surveyed by Robson, and Nicholas Garry, in 1821, refers to the relative positions of the old and new forts: "Governor Williams and myself went off (from York) for the Nelson, passed about a quarter of a mile this side the old fort destroyed by Perouse; some remains still exist, and we saw several cannon on the beach."[24] J. B. Tyrrell, there in 1912, states that the old fort could be clearly identified by Robson's plan, and was about half a mile north of (i. e. down-stream from) York Factory. Using the bends of the small stream shown on Robson's plan, and comparing with the present stream, he reaches the conclusion that the bank of Hayes river has been cut away by the river to the extent of 167 ft. since Robson's survey of 1745. The line of bank in 1912, he states, cut through a cellar which was evidently under one of the buildings destroyed by Perouse.[25]

23. H. B. Co. Memorial to Lds of Trade, 4 August 1714, quoted by Mills. p. 315.
24. Trans. Roy. Soc. Can. vol. VI. sec. II. p. 153.
25. Ontario Bureau of Mines Rept. 1913. p. 184.

York Factory has had a remarkable history. Established in 1684, within fourteen years of the charter of the oldest company in the world, it has continually been occupied to the present time. Six times during the contest for the bay, so great was its importance considered, it passed between British and French possession, and now, long after that contest has ended, it is still held by the same company that established it two hundred and forty two years ago.



THORNTON'S MAP OF PORT NELSON IN 1685

From a copy in Canadian Archives

TWENTY YEARS OF YORK FACTORY

TO begin at the beginning of events, and to make my account more readily understood, it may be said that the Danes sailed in these regions eighty to one hundred years ago. [1]

Hudson strait takes its name from Henry Hudson, an Englishman who discovered it in the year 1612. [2] It is a hundred and twenty leagues long, and sixteen or eighteen wide. The shores on both sides are steep rocks of prodigious height, cut up by dark ravines [3] where the sun never shines. Snow and ice are found there throughout the year, and give rise to terrible winds, and if advantage were not taken of periods when they are less severe, it would be impossible to sail through. The strait is navigable only from 15th July to 15th October, and even during this period there is sometimes no passage, except through an ice-field, and it is not easy to understand how a ship can make its way, for the floes are sometimes so packed that, as far as the eye can see, not a drop of water is visible. Recourse is had to grappling, that is, the ships are made fast to these ice-pans as to a quay, and when by the force of the winds and currents, which are very violent in these parts, a lead is opened through the ice, then sails are set if the wind is favourable, and a channel is made with the aid of long handled boat hooks. With these the ice sheets are pushed or turned aside, but sometimes, despite all efforts, a ship remains hemmed in for more than a month without being able to advance. It is this which makes sailing in these waters difficult, for otherwise, with certain precautions, no more risk is run than in other seas. [4]

1. Munk's expedition, 1619. They had been preceded by Hudson and Button.
2. Hudson took possession of the strait and bay in 1610.
3. Reading, with Charlevoix, 'ravines' in place of 'collines'.
4. "Sometimes it takes a very long time to pass through the strait. We (d'Iberville's expedition, 1694) were fortunate to do so in four days. We entered it at four in the morning of 1st September, and left it on the 5th, also in the morning." Marest.

Although this strait is quite uncultivated, and the most sterile of all countries in the world, there are yet natives called Eskimos who inhabit these sorry wastes. They have this in common with the country they occupy, that they are so wild and intractable that it has not yet been possible to get them interested in trade. They make war on all their neighbours, and when they kill or capture any of their enemies, they eat them raw and drink their blood. They even make infants at the breast drink it, so as to instil in them the barbarism and ardour of war from their tenderest years.

They seldom have any fire because of the scarcity of wood. Yet the cold there is intense at all seasons. They live in winter in the clefts of the rocks where they shut themselves up with their families, and lodge all together without distinction of sex or relationship. There they remain for more than eight months without seeing the light of day. During the three or four summer months they take the precaution to gather a food supply of the flesh of whales, walrus, and seal, many of which are found all over these regions. They do all their hunting and kill all kinds of animals with arrows, and that very skilfully. They have never had any experience of fire arms or iron tools, except when they surprise some of our fishing boats. After they have mangled and eaten our poor sailors they use their boats to go from place to place, and when these boats are beyond service they break them up to get the nails, and these they fashion between two stones for their use. They make a kind of biscayner which they cover with seal skins instead of planking. I have seen such biscayners big enough to carry more than fifty people. In the same way they make small canoes in which they leave only a small central opening, big enough to hold one man seated. The opening is surrounded by a flap which is tied around the body in such a way that the waves go over their heads without the canoe filling with water. They have big paddles or oars, flat at both ends, which they use as balancing poles, and they would find it hard to keep their seat without these, so small are the canoes. [5]

5. Biscayners are double-bowed boats with two masts, navigable with sail or oar. The Eskimo umiak is 20 ft. or more long, 6 ft. wide in the middle, tapering to the square ends, about 3 ft. wide. Their kayak is about 18 ft. long, and 2½ ft. wide. The white man's punt has now superseded both miak and kayak.

Unlike other uncivilised tribes, few of whom have any beard, these people have beards which reach to their eyes. This has led some people, who have speculated on their origin, to think that they must have originated from some Basque ship which, while fishing, was wrecked on these coasts, and its crew have multiplied since then. [6] Their language, though much corrupted, has yet a certain resemblance to Basque, and this gives colour to the conjecture. They never cut their great beard, and it gives them an aspect so frightful and hideous that they resemble wild beasts more than men. Indeed their only resemblance to other men is in their arms and legs.

At the end of this strait, on the north side, is a bay which we call Assumption bay, about which we know nothing certain as yet. Some of our navigators, who have drifted thirty or forty leagues into it, have noticed that their compasses no longer have their usual movements, and this leads to the conclusion that there must be some mine along this bay which attracts the needle from all quarters. [7] It is believed that there is a connection from the end of this bay to Davis strait. [8] Almost all the ice which passes out through Hudson strait comes from this bay. The way in which icebergs are formed is not yet known. They are so immense that they rise above the water to a greater height than the masts of the largest ships. Once we sounded beside a stranded iceberg to find its extent below water, and we could not reach bottom at a hundred fathoms.

Higher up the west coast is a big island which we call Phelipeaux, [9] where walrus are numerous, and if the season would allow a landing to be made, there is no doubt much ivory could be col-

6. "The Basques, both of Spain and France, were from early times, the boldest seamen along the coasts of the Bay of Biscay .... and followed the whale far out to sea when, in the middle of the 16th century, they became scarce near the coast." S. E. Dawson: The St. Lawrence Basin. The Basques hunted whales regularly in the strait of Belle Isle.

7. Foxe Channel. The reference is to the sluggishness of the movements, which puzzled early navigators long before the real cause (which is not due to mines) was discovered. As the magnetic pole is approached, the magnetic force dips so much towards the earth that its horizontal component, which directs the needle, is much weakened. Compare Foxe, in 1631: "Within the mouth of this strait (W. end of Hudson s.) the compasse doth loose his sensitive part, not regarding his magneticall azimuth without much stirring." Also James, same year: "The fogge spoiled all our compasses, and made them flagge, and so heavy withall they would not traverse."

8. There is no connection.

9. Mansel island. Louis Phélipeaux, Comte de Pontchartrain, French Minister of Marine and Colonies, 1690-99, succeeded by his son in the same office.

lected, and much profit could probably be made from such a venture. The teeth of these walrus are a cubit in length ,and they are as thick as a man's arm, and the ivory is almost as fine as that of an elephant. This island is not high like the rest of the strait. On the contrary, it is very flat and its sandy shore gives it quite a pleasing appearance. Opposite to the island there is a very low piece of land which we call Assumption cape.[10] I do not give any particulars about it, as no one ever goes near enough to learn anything about its characteristics.

To return now to our first subject, I must point out that the Danes, after they had passed the strait which I have described, kept steadily on to the north, and ultimately they reached the mainland at a river which has been named Danish river, but which the natives call Manoteou-sibi, which means Strangers' river.[11] There they put their ships in winter quarters, and housed themselves as best they could, much as would be done by people who know nothing about that country, and who have no forethought in providing against the intense cold which must come upon them. In the end they suffered so much misery that, when sickness broke out among them they all died during the winter, without a single native being aware of what had happened. When springtime came the ice went out with its usual impetuosity, and carried away their ship and everything in it except an eight-pounder brass cannon which was left behind, and which is still there, undamaged but for the button of the cascabel which the natives have broken by striking it with stones.[12]

Next summer, when the natives reached the place, they were much astonished to see so many dead bodies, the more so as they had never seen men of that kind before. Terror stricken, at first they ran away, not knowing what to make of such a sight. Then, when fear had given way to curiosity, they went back thinking they would secure the richest spoils that had ever been obtained. Unfor-

10. Really an island—Coats island. The fact that it was separate from the mainland was not known for a century later.

11. Jens Eriksen Munk (1579-1628), Danish naval officer sent by King Christian IV to seek the North West passage. Sailed from Copenhagen 9th May 1619 with two ships, crossed Hudson bay, and wintered at modern Churchill. The cold, want of supplies and scurvy destroyed his crew and only Munk and three others reached Europe with one ship in September 1620. His narrative was published in 1623. Danish river is modern Churchill. Omanotew, Cree for stranger; sibi, river.

12. The knob at the extreme rear end of muzzle-loading cannon.

tunately there was powder, and knowing nothing of its properties or its power, they foolishly set fire to it, with the result that they were all killed, and the house and everything in it were burnt up. So the others who came later got nothing except the nails and pieces of iron, which they gathered up from the ashes of the conflagration.

Danish river is no more than five hundred paces wide at its mouth, where it is very deep, which creates a strong current at every tide when the sea comes up and flows out with great rapidity. This narrow entrance is not more than a quarter of a league long, then the river widens and is readily navigable along its course for a distance of a hundred and fifty leagues. There is very little wood in any part of this country, except on the islands by which this river is much cut up. After going up a hundred and fifty leagues there is a chain of high mountains which make the river unfit for navigation owing to water-falls and continuous rapids. Beyond these the river is again placid, and there is a communication with another river called Deer river.[13] I will refer to it later.

Returning to our original intention of giving all possible information about all these regions, we must again go down to the sea, and resume our journey northwards. Fifteen leagues from Danish river we reach Seal river,[13] so called from the number of seals at its mouth. Between these two rivers a kind of ox is met with which we call musk-ox on account of their musk-like odour which is so strong at a certain season of the year that their flesh cannot be eaten. These animals have very beautiful wool, longer than that of Barbary sheep. I took some to France in 1708 and had stockings made of it, and they were finer than those made of silk. I still have a small remnant of this wool here, and I would have the honour of sending it to you, if I thought my doing so would please you. This would allow a trial to be made of it by skilful workmen.

These oxen, while smaller than ours, have yet much larger and longer horns. The bases of the horns meet at the top of the head, where they form a large hump, and the horns hang down past the eyes almost as low as the mouth. The end of each horn then turns up, forming a kind of crescent. So large are the horns that I have seen a pair weigh sixty pounds, apart from the skull. The oxen

13. Probably modern Reindeer r. tributary of Churchill r. Jérémie is mistaken in thinking that the Deer r. to which he refers later is the same river.

14. Still known as Seal r., about 45 miles by the coast to the north west of modern Churchill.

have very short legs, so that their wool always drags along the ground when they walk, and this so confuses their appearance that even when only a short distance away, it is difficult to tell which end is the head. There is not a great number of these animals. If they were numerous enough to be worth hunting they would soon have been destroyed by the natives, especially as owing to their short legs, they are hunted when the snow is deep, and are killed with a spear without their being able to run away.[15]

Seal river extends up to the country of a nation called Dogribs who make war on our Maskegons, that is, the people with whom we trade.[16] As they have no experience with fire arms, no more than the Eskimos, as soon as they hear a few shots fired they all run away, leaving their women and children, and these our natives carry away as prisoners and make them slaves. They capture very few of the men because they run faster than our men. They have a mine of native copper in their country, where this metal is so abundant and so pure that, without any smelting but just as they pick it up at the mine, it is hammered between two stones and they make whatever they want out of it. I have seen this copper very often, as our natives always bring some back when they go to war in those parts.[17]

The Dogribs have pleasant and kindly faces, and this makes me think that, if we could persuade them to trade, we would get along well with them. Their country is very barren, without beaver or other fur, and all they have to live on is fish and a kind of deer which we call caribou. The caribou they kill with arrows, and also

15. This is the first published account of the musk-ox. "The description gives a fairly good impression of the animal, but it is hardly correct to state that the wool drags on the ground as the animal walks. The wool is not very long, but the outer guard hairs hang low, and might appear to sweep the ground if the musk-ox were standing in grass or snow. Jérémie seems to have greatly exaggerated the weight of the head, as the average weight of a pair of horns with the skull is about 26 lbs. The Barbary sheep, ovis tragelephus, is a species confined to North Africa. It is higher at the withers than the domestic sheep, and has long hair hanging down from the fore-part of the body". R. M. Anderson.

16. Savanois (text), meaning people of the grassy meadows or swamps, sometimes called Swampy Crees.

17. The earliest printed reference to the far-famed 'copper mines.' Hearne, first white man to see the place, July 1771, says: "The Northern Indians used to resort to these hills every summer in search of copper, of which they made hatchets, ice chissels, knives, arrow-heads, (etc.)" He describes the 'mines' as an entire jumble of rocks and gravel, and about 30 miles S. S. E. of mouth of Coppermine r. The hills, he states are about 1,000 ft. above the river

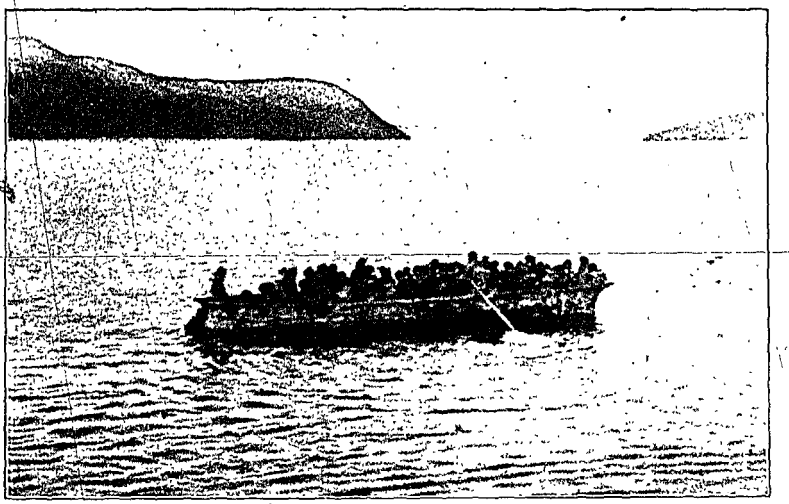


Photo by Geological Survey of Canada.

ESKIMO UMIAK OR WOMAN'S BOAT
JÉRÉMIE'S BISCAYNER

Photo. by Dr W. T. Hornaday, Zoological Society, N.Y.

MUSK-OX CALVES

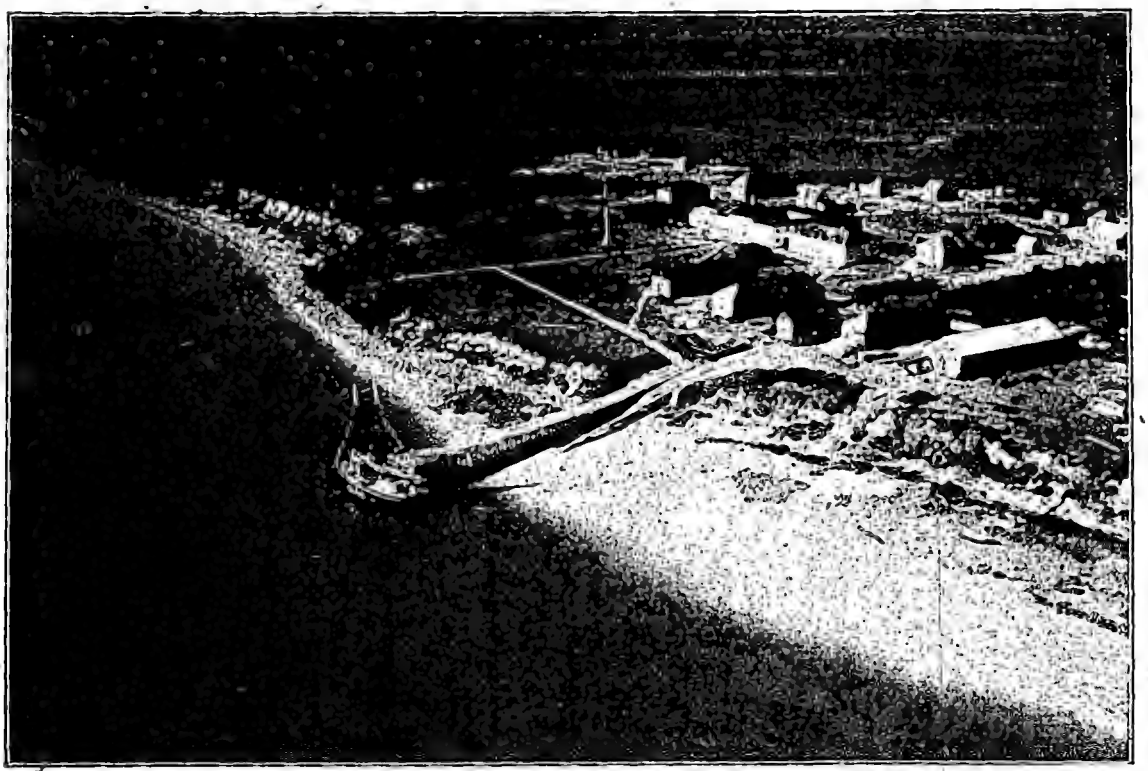


Photo. by Royal Canadian Air Force

YORK FACTORY, LOOKING INLAND

take them with snares.[18] There are hares of much larger size than in France. These are white in winter and grey in summer, while their very large ears are always black. The skin in winter is very beautiful and the hair is long and does not fall out like that of the European hares, so that fine muffs could be made of the fur.

I shall not say anything positive about the conditions along the coast further north, except that our natives have told us that at the end of this bay, there is a strait where one can readily see across from one side to the other. They have not yet penetrated to the end of this strait. According to them there is ice there all the year round and the currents carry it sometimes to one side and sometimes to the other. Judging by appearances there is reason to believe that this arm of the sea communicates with the Western sea.[19] And this conjecture receives support when the wind blows from the north, for then the sea pours so strongly through this strait that the water rises all over Hudson bay, sometimes to a height of ten feet above its normal. And it is said that whenever they notice that the water is rising they look for a haven to shelter them from the north wind.[20]

The natives say that after several months travel to the west south west they have found the sea on which they have seen large canoes (they mean ships), with men who have beards and who wear caps, and who gather gold on the shore of the sea (that is, at the mouths of the rivers).

The Dogribs, to whom I have just referred, have no iron except what they come and pick up among the debris of the Danish fire. They think themselves well repaid for their trouble if they find three or four small rusty nails about as long as one's finger. And sometimes they come on foot more than four hundred leagues, for they never use canoes. The Eskimos of Hudson strait sometimes

18. These snares are described further on, where Jerémie says that the natives made barriers of trees, and left openings in which snares, made of rawhide, were hung on the trees at such height as to form a head noose. A hundred snares might be set at one time. These hedges are shown on Robson's map.

19. The only 'straits' in the region indicated, where it is possible to see across from one side to the other, are Chesterfield inlet and Wager inlet, the existence of which was then known. The reference is probably to the former. In 1749 a pamphlet was published in London, entitled "Reasons to show a great Probability of a navigable passage to the Western American Ocean through Hudson's Streights and Chesterfield Inlet." See Can. Arch. 1914-15, App. D. p. 16.

20. Modern tide records do not show any rise, due to wind, exceeding two feet.

come too for the same purpose, crossing Hudson bay in the biscayners made of walrus skin which have already been described.[21]

We must now turn to Fort Bourbon which is sixty leagues from Danish river. In the intervening country there is nothing worth noting except that, during the summer, enormous bands of caribou are seen. These are driven from the woods by the great multitude of mosquitoes and horse flies, as we call them, and come out to the sea coast for relief. Bands containing over ten thousand may be seen, and this continually for forty or fifty leagues.[22] If the skins of these animals could be used for anything, the natives could be prevailed upon to get all that were wanted, but our tanners of Niort say they are too weak to stand being dressed.[23]

All sorts of game are also found, swans, geese, brant, cranes, and ducks, and in fact every other kind of small game, and these in such great numbers that, when all the flocks rise, they make such a noise you cannot hear yourself speak, and the air is so obscured with them you can hardly see the sky beyond. This may seem overdrawn, like some of the other statements I must make if I am to give a full account of everything, yet I can assert that I have set down nothing without having first seen and examined it myself, and I have myself visited nearly every place mentioned, so as not to risk anything on the report of others.

Bourbon river, which the natives call Paouiriniouagou, meaning the descent of strangers, was discovered some years later than Danish river. It bears the name of an Englishman called Nelson.[24]

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21. "Previous to 1713 the Northern Indians had no other metal (except copper from Coppermine r.) but a few pieces of old iron found at Churchill, which had undoubtedly been left by captain Monk." Hearne. He states that this want of metal caused them to go to Coppermine r.

22. "M. de Serigny told us that on All Saints day, and on All Souls day, more than 10,000 caribou passed a league from the huts on the other (northwest) side of Bourbon (Nelson) r." Marest.

23. Niort, 28 miles from La Rochelle, still a centre of the tanning trade. Caribou hide is thin in mid-Winter, while it is thick and at its best in spring. The weak hide must have been taken at the wrong season. There is an editorial foot-note here in the 1720 edition: "Caribou skins can be tanned, and are very beautiful. I have seen a piece dressed by the Indians of Canada." This is the only foot-note in that edition.

24. The present Indian name for Nelson r. is Powinigow. Cocking calls it Powethiniko, and Radisson gives the name as Kawirinagaw, which he says means 'wicked'. (Can. Arch. 1895. p. 13). The name Nelson was given by Button (in command of the expedition referred to by Jérémie) after his sailing master, who died there in winter 1611-12. See introduction regarding the name Bourbon.

He reached there in the autumn, very late, and landed on the north side of this river, but as the natives had, by that time, retired to the depth of the woods, Nelson saw no one who could tell him about the country. As he feared the same fate might befall him as had happened to the Danes, he contented himself with planting a post on which he raised the arms of England as a title of possession, with a large board on which a ship was depicted. He also hung a big kettle on a tree, and in it placed some small articles. These the natives made use of in the springtime, when they came back to the sea coast. As they already had samples of these kinds of goods through the disaster which happened to the Danes, they felt sure that the same people, who had left them such a rich store, would come again next year. They waited until the end of the season. The English returned, as was expected, and they saw the natives who received them in a friendly way, and guided them, with their ship, to the islands which are seven leagues up the river, and there the English made their first establishment.[25]

M. de Groseilliers,[26] a citizen of Canada and an enterprising man and great traveller, while out with our natives of Canada in the country of the Outaouas, pressed on so far that he learned of Hudson bay. On his return to Quebec he associated himself with some merchants, fitted out a barque, and undertook to discover it by sea. In this he succeeded, and landed at a river which the natives call Pinasiouetchiouen, meaning Rapid river, which is only a league from the one which I have just mentioned.[27] He built his establishment on the south side, among the islands which are three leagues up the river. During the winter, when the rivers were frozen, the Canadians who were with M. de Groseilliers and who were strong and

25. Foxe, in 1631, found near Button's winter-quarters the remains of a cross and an inscribed board. The cross he re-erected "in the right of my dreade soveraigne Charles the First." The inscription on the board, still partly legible claimed "this coast of New Wales" for the English. Jérémie is, however, confusing Button's actions with similar actions by H. B. Co. captains who, in 1669, set up the King's arms, and on that and on subsequent voyages left articles, up to 1682, when "the English made their first establishment." See Can. Arch. 1883. p. 178, and

26. Medard Chouart des Groseillers (? 1621-died before 1697), whose fur-trading career is bound up with that of his brother in law, Pierre Esprit Radisson (? 1636-1710). Both were born in France.

27. Jérémie implies that Groseilliers made a sea voyage for Quebec merchants immediately after he had heard of Hudson bay, but he is confusing the voyage Groseilliers made in 1668 in association with English merchants, who later formed the H. B. Co. His first voyage for Quebec merchants was to Hayes r. in 1682. This is the river referred to as Rapid r.

agile men in the woods, were out hunting along the sea shore at the mouth of Nelson river, which we now call Bourbon river. To their surprise they came upon an establishment of Europeans. They quickly returned, without letting themselves be seen, and advised their commandant. He at once armed all his people, and set out at their head to find out the real state of affairs. They carefully approached the place. Seeing only a small hovel roofed with turf and with the door open, they went in, arms in hand, and found six English sailors who were dying of hunger and cold. They made no attempt to defend themselves but, on the contrary, thought they were very fortunate in being made prisoners by the French as it meant saving their lives.

These six sailors had been cast away from a ship which had fitted out at Boston in New England, its owners not knowing anything of the first comers who had fitted out at London. The sailors were cast away in this manner. They arrived very late in the season, and after dropping anchor at the mouth of Bourbon river the captain sent a boat ashore with five men to find winter quarters. That night it was so cold that the ice which comes down that river carried away the ship, and it was never heard of again.

During the course of the winter some natives came to M. de Groseilliers' house and told him that there was another English establishment seven leagues up Bourbon river.[28] He at once made arrangements for attacking them but, as they were fortified, he was cautious and chose a day when they would have a holiday. So he attacked them on the feast of the Epiphany, and surprised them when they were so intoxicated that they were captured without being able to make any defense, although they numbered eighty

28. The three parties reached the estuary of Port Nelson at almost the same time, but came independently. Radisson and Groseilliers in the Ste Anne, 30 tons, and St. Pierre, 50 tons, with 27 men, built on south side of Hayes river. The Boston party, under Gillam, junior, in the Batchelor's Delight, with 9 men, built on Gillam island in Nelson river. The H. B. Co. in the Prince Rupert under Gillam, senior, with Bridgar as gevernor and 24 men, built on north side of Nelson r. The H. B. Co. admitted they were last, but were ready to allow the New England party as competent to represent England, although interlopers as against the company. "It can be proved by authentick witnesses that these French ships arrived after ye vessel from Boston whereof young Gillam was master, being his majesty's subject, tho' he did not owne the English Company. This late taking of Possession, on which there is noe necessity of founding our right, was seconded few days after by the arrival of an other vessell from England whereof Guilham the father was master, at which time Mr. Bridgard Governor for the English Company made knowne to ye French His Majestye's Right." Can. Arch. 1883, p. 186.

Englishmen while there were only fourteen of our Frenchmen. So M. de Groseilliers was master of the whole country.[29]

In the following summer, when he set out for Canada to report his exploits and discoveries, he left his son Chouart with five men to keep the post which he had captured.[30] Taking his brother in law, Ratisson, with him he returned to Canada, well loaded with furs and other goods of the English. But although, to all appearance, they had done well enough to entitle them to a good reception, they were greatly irritated by accusations in regard to some alleged spoils which they had not reported to the owners of the ship, so that M. de Groseilliers had to send his brother in law Ratisson to France with a complaint of the injustice done them. But his reception there was worse than in Canada, and this made him so desperate that he decided to go to England and propose fitting out a ship to go back for his nephew Chouart, whom he had lately left in Hudson bay. This he did, and so positive were his accounts of the country that he was given a well supplied ship, and with this he went and again took over the place, which at that time was called Port Nelson.[31]

The English retained possession of these posts until 1694 when M. d'Iberville fitted out two ships, the Poli and the Charante, which were commanded by his brother M. de Serigny.[32] He went

29 .Probably no one incident in the history of Hudson bay led to so much controversy as this seizure of the two English posts during a time of peace.

30. "On 27 July we raised anchor . . . We remained in the ice, eight leagues from the port to August.24." Radisson's journal. Can. Arch. 1895. p. 47.

31. Radisson complains that de la Chesnaye, chief financial backer, acted dishonourably, and that the customs officers at Quebec deprived him of his fourth share of furs promised him for his explorations. Journal, pp. 44, 51. The journey to France was ordered by de la Barre, complying with Colbert's request to send some one who had been engaged in northern discoverie.. Radisson states that Groseilliers accompanied him. On reaching France they found Colbert, on whom they relied, was dead. Radisson's actions at Port Nelson were disowned by the French King as breach of treaty. The H. B. Co. give their version that "Radisson fearing the just reward of his sayd robbery. flyes from ffrance to England where he did obtaine his life in giving security to goe againe in the Companie's service and restore these forts." Can. Arch. M. 394. The company probably recognised him as much more useful as ally than rival.

32. Pierre le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville (1661-1706), third and most famous of sons of Charles le Moyne, sieur de Longueil. His brother, Joseph de Serigny (1668-1734) attained high rank in the French navy, and was governor of La Rochelle at time of his death. The second ship is called Salamandre by Marest, and in the terms of surrender of the fort. Can. Arch. M. 394. B. p. 203.

by way of Canada with the object of recruiting a hundred Canadians, intending then to go and re-take Hudson bay, but this design did not succeed.

We set out from Quebec on 10th August, St. Lawrence's day, and reached the anchorage at Port Nelson on 24th September. M. d'Iberville landed all his men immediately with the field guns, mortars and other munitions of war. Our first care was to make good batteries and platforms where we placed our cannons and mortars, about five hundred paces from the fort palisades. The fort had four bastions, forming a square of thirty feet, in which was a large warehouse of two stories. The trading store was in one of these bastions, another served as a supply store, and the other two were used as guard houses to hold the garrison. The whole was built of wood. In line with the first palisade were two other bastions, in one of which the officers lodged, the other serving as a kitchen and forge for the garrison. Between these two bastions was a kind of half moon space in which were eight cannon, throwing an eight pound ball, which commanded the river side. Below this half moon space was a platform, at the level of the water, which held six pieces of heavy cannon. No cannon was mounted on the side of the wood;[33] all the cannon and swivel guns were on the bastions. There were altogether in the fort, which had only two palisades of upright logs, thirty two cannon and fourteen swivel guns. There were fifty three men in the fort. We harassed them from 25th September, the day on which we landed, until 14th October. Besieged on all sides they could not withstand our bombs, and they were ceaselessly galled by our marksmen who kept up a continual fire from their loop holes. At last they were obliged to surrender, asking only that their lives be spared, a condition which was readily granted.[34]

On the 15th M. d'Iberville made his entry. The fort was named Fort Bourbon, and the river on which it is situate was named St. Teresa river, because the fort was brought under the authority of

33. Meaning the rear of the fort. Marest's account indicates that d'Iberville tried to surprise the English by a landing party from Nelson r. the very night he arrived in that river, but failed.

34. "Their minister had drawn up the capitulation in Latin, and I served as interpreter on our side. This fort is built of wood only, and smaller and feebler than we had believed. The English garrison numbered 53 men, all quite tall and well built. Their commander was a better trader than soldier, which profession he had never followed." Marest.

the French on St. Teresa's day, the 14th October. We lost a brother of M. d'Iberville on this occasion.[35] The fort was well supplied with all kinds of merchandise and munitions, both for the table and for the war. Our ships were put in winter quarters, as the season was too far advanced to allow a return to Europe.[36]

In 1695, on the 20th July, M. d'Iberville sailed away with his two ships, leaving us, to the number of sixty-seven men, under command of a man named M. de la Forest. M. de Martigny was lieutenant, while I was ensign, interpreter of native languages and director of commerce.[37]

On 2nd September in the year 1696 the English arrived with four war ships and a bomb ketch.[38] M. de Serigny, who had set out from Rochelle with two small ships, the Hardi and the Dragon, arrived two hours after the English, but as they occupied the anchorage he could not come to our aid. He was obliged to return to France, and arrived there without mishap, but the Hardi, commanded by M. la Motte-Egron, was wrecked on the way to Canada.

On the 5th of the month the English began their attack on us with their ketch, which they placed within cannon shot of the

35. St Teresa's day is October 15. The name selected may also have had reference to Marie Thérèse, queen of France. "M. d'Iberville's brother had gone (within a day or so of their arrival to attack the fort to divert attention from our difficulties. Going too near, he was wounded by a ball. We thought the wound was not mortal, but were soon undeceived, as he died next day. M. d'Iberville was greatly affected by his death." Marest. The English were now left with only one establishment, Fort Albany, in Hudson bay.

36. Marest states the wintering places had been selected and the two ships placed there, with great difficulty, before the regular siege, the Poli in Nelson, and the Salamandre in Hayes r., d'Iberville sounding each river himself. Serigny piloted the Poli to its place, and on 27th d'Iberville with the Salamandre reached mouth of Hayes r. "M. d'Iberville set out towards midnight to sound this second river, and found a place half a league above the fort, where a large point juts into the river and forms a sort of cove where the ship would be safe from the ice which is much dreaded in the spring." Marest. The place in Hayes r. would be Mile Bluff on Robson's plan, but now washed away. The Salamandre was towed up the river by moonlight, with sixteen men at the oar. The cannon shot from the fort fell short.

37. Gabriel de la Forest, born 1661, son of Jacques Testard, sieur de la Forest, who married at Ville-Marie in 1659 and died in 1663. Distinguish the better known François de la Forest, friend and lieutenant of la Salle. Jean Baptiste le Moyne, sieur de Montigny, born 1662, was cousin of d'Iberville. Evidently Jérémie was third in command.

38. Under command of captain William Allen. Two men of war, Bonaventure (Allen) and Seaforth (Grainge) with three H. B. Co. ships, the Dering (Bayley), the Hudson's Bay (Grimington) and the Knight (Smithsend). Allen's orders are given in Can. Arch. Docs. M. 394. p. 260. He was directed "to permit the Co's ships to wear his majesty's flag during this expedition." Later the Co. said their 3 ships had a total of 68 guns and 179 men.

fort, supporting it with two ships. On the 6th we saw they were getting ready to land. M. de la Forest sent me with fourteen men to oppose this. Four hundred men were told off for the landing party. They made several attempts, but as we were concealed in the brushwood, and I took care to have my men shoot in turns, one after the other, whenever I saw an armed boat appear, the English quickly returned on board, not daring to make a rush, as they did not know how many men we had in our ambuscade. Yet they threw bombs continuously, twenty two of which fell in the fort and on several occasions nearly set it on fire. At last, with hardly any food or amunition left, and recognising that we could no longer hope for aid from France, we were obliged to capitulate. They acceded to all our conditions. The articles of capitulation were most favourable. But they were false to their promises for, instead of landing us on French soil with all our effects as they had promised, they took us to England and threw us in prison, while our furs and other belongings were plundered.[39] Four months later we returned to France where a squadron of four ships was being fitted out for the re-capture of the fort we had just lost. We were all put on board, and went to join M. d'Iberville who was then at Placentia, and he there took over the command of the four ships destined for Hudson bay. He went on board the Pelican, 50 guns. His brother M. de Serigny commanded the Palmier, 40 guns, while the Profond was commanded by M. Dugué, and M. Chartrie commanded the Vespe.[40]

39. Jérémie's statement that the terms were not kept is well supported, but he omits a matter which, while not justifying, may explain a good deal. Capt. Allen was killed, near home, in a running fight with a French frigate, and he, at least, was not there to see that his signature was honoured. Complaint was made by the French to the British govt. and an enquiry held in London de la Forest attending. The H. B. Co. denied Allen was authorised to make such terms, and "supposing the Articles were true (seemingly an unworthy suggestion,) they had a right to break them by way of reprisal because the French had done the same thing (i. e. in not having observed terms when d'Iberville took the fort in 1694) and had barbarously used the company in time of peace and war." This view did not find favour, and the matter is referred to in art. 8, treaty of Ryswick 1697: "The capitulation made (i. e. granted) by the English 5 Sept. 1696 shall be observed according to its form and tenor, the merchandize therein mentioned shall be restored, the governor at the fort shall be set at liberty, if not already done, and the value of the goods shall be adjudicated." Regarding date, the fort being surrendered 1st, not 5th, see Rept. Committee on Ont. Bound. Ottawa, 1880, p. 223. Meanwhile d'Iberville had again captured the fort.

40. Placentia, S. E. Newfoundland, occupied by the French since 1626. C. B. Reed states d'Iberville left there 8 July 1697, he commanding Pelican, Serigny the Profond, and Boisbriant (Dugué) the Vespe. The 4th. ship, supply vessel Esquimaux, was lost in H. strait. Pierre du Gué (1675-1740) followed d'Iberville to Louisiana and was governor of New Orleans.

After entering Hudson strait the ice forced us to separate. M. d'Iberville went on ahead, while M. Dugué was driven by the currents right up to the north side where he fell in with three English ships. Against these he fought from eight o'clock in the morning until eleven o'clock at night, without the English being able to capture him, for although they were his superior in numbers they were not so in courage.

M. d'Iberville, as I said, had gone on ahead. He reached the anchorage off Fort Bourbon on 5th September, and at once sent a boat ashore with twenty five men picked from his crew. On the 6th the English ships arrived, and M. d'Iberville made ready to receive them. He weighed anchor and stood towards them. They flattered themselves that they would capture him, seeing that he was one against three, but were much astonished when they saw the courage of his attack. At the very first volley one of the ships surrendered to him, not daring to continue the fight. Then he ran alongside the flag-ship of 50 guns, and fired a broadside so accurately and with such effect that, before they had time to tack, they saw half the sails of the Englishman in the water, and the ship sinking before the eyes of his countryman, and he, seeing such a disaster, thought only of saving himself. M. d'Iberville gave chase, but the ship escaped under cover of night, and M. d'Iberville then returned to take possession of his prize or, as they say at sea, to man his prize.[41]

41. The English ships were the Hampshire, flag-ship, which had 52 guns and 150 men, with two H. B. Co. armed merchantmen, the Hudson's Bay, 32 guns, and the Dering, 30 guns. A fire-ship, the Owners Love, had been lost in the ice before the action. As already stated, there is no account of this sea fight, written on the British side, and it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that, for some reason, the whole story has not been told. The chief difficulty is the French account of the sinking of the Hampshire. Kingsford says: "I cannot resist the evidence that the Hampshire was struck by a squall and capsized. Nautical men tell me that no broadside with guns of that date could so instantaneously sink a ship of that size. This may be said, that there was no desperately contested action, as has been represented. One man was killed on board the Pelican, and seventeen only were wounded." Robson takes a similar view, saying that the Hampshire, by some unlucky accident, overset. D'Iberville, in his report, claims his broadside sunk the Hampshire: "I fired my broadside and sank her immediately, the vessel not passing onward three lengths. I tacked immediately, and ran alongside the Hudson's Bay to board her, but she struck her flag." The Hampshire being lost, each of the remaining two ships was outclassed by the Pelican. It will be noted Jérémie's statenent that one ship surrendered before the loss of the Hampshire is contrary to d'Iberville.

During the night between the 7th and 8th there arose such a furious gale from the north that M. d'Iberville and his prize were driven ashore, in spite of all their efforts. Both ships were lost, and twenty three men drowned. The others got safely to land when the tide was low.

When all our ships had arrived we began to lay siege to the fort. They made no great resistance, and surrendered unconditionally as soon as they learned from their countrymen that they could not expect help from Europe, and heard what had happened to their ships.

After M. d'Iberville had made his entry into the fort, and had put everything in order, he was anxious to get back to Europe. He went on board the Profond and set sail on 24th September, accompanied by the Vespe. He left his brother M. de Serigny in command of the fort, as the Palmier which he commanded had broken her rudder by touching on a bar.

In 1698 another ship arrived with a rudder on board, for in all this country, where only saplings grow, no wood suitable for the purpose could be found. Then the two ships went back to France, and M. de Serigny gave over the command of the fort to his relative M. de Martigny. As for myself I remained as lieutenant along with my position as interpreter. There were three commandants in succession, one after the other, but nothing of note occurred.[42]

I had asked the gentlemen of the company on several occasions for leave to go to France, and they at last granted my request in 1707. On reaching la Rochelle I was recommended to the Court to relieve the man who had command at Fort Broubon. He was M. Delisle, and was a brother of M. de St Michel, formerly harbour master at Rochefort.

In 1708 we left la Rochelle, where I had recruited a new garrison, but when we reached the entrance to Hudson strait, the wind was contrary for such a length of time, that we had to put into Placentia, and from there I had the honour of writing to you for permission to get stores in Canada, and you were good enough to give your consent.

42. Jérémie was now second in command. The three commandants may have been Serigny Flamanville and Delisle, or there may also have been others.

We reached our destination in 1709, and I found M. Delisle and the whole garrison in great distress owing to the almost entire want of food and ammunition. As we arrived very late and, in addition, the ship had been much damaged in the ice, a second laying up for the winter occurred,[43] and this caused great loss to the gentlemen of the company, as they had to pay and feed two garrisons and a large staff. During the winter M. Delisle died from an attack of asthma. I remained as commandant at Fort Bourbon for six years, a position I had the honour of holding by the express order of the King, whose commissions I still have in my possession. None of my predecessors had anything similar.

In 1714 I received orders from the Court, with letters from Count Pontchartrain, directing me to hand over the post to the English in accordance with the treaty of Utrecht.

But I am abusing your kindness, Sir, by speaking for so long a time about useless matters. I must get back to our original intention, which is to give you all possible information about the general situation of Fort Bourbon, and the advantages which can be gained from its commerce.

Although the fort is built on St. Teresa river, all the natives travel down Bourbon river when coming to trade.[44] This river extends to so great a distance that it passes through several large lakes. The first of these is about a hundred and fifty leagues from the sea, and has a circuit of about a hundred leagues. The natives call it Tatusquoyaou-secahigan, which means Lake of the Forts.[45] On the northern side of this lake a river falls in which is called Quisisquatchiouen, or Swift Current river.[46] This river has its source in a lake which is more than three hundred leagues from the first one, and which is called Michinipi or Big Water, as it is the largest and deepest of all the lakes. Its circuit is more than six hundred leagues, and it receives the water of several rivers, by some of which Danish river can be reached, and some are in the country of the Dogribs.

43. That is, once at Placentia, and again at Ft. Bourbon.

44. Jérémie qualifies this later by saying they come down Bourbon r. only to Split lake, and then cross to Hayes r.

45. Modern Split lake, which is the correct translation of the Indian name given by Jérémie. His reference to forts is obscure; there was no fort there.

46. Continuation of modern Nelson r. towards lake Winnipeg (Michinipi, great water). This part of Nelson r. was sometimes called Saskatchewan.

In the country around this lake and along these rivers there are many natives, some of whom are called the People of the Big Water,[47] and the others are Assinibouels. The humanity and courtesy of these people are in marked contrast with the wildness and barbarism of the Eskimos. Indeed all the people with whom we trade in the whole bay always treat the French as their fathers and protectors. The same attachment is not shown towards the English. They say they are too deceitful and that they never tell the truth, and this they do not like. Although uncivilized, they detest lying—a remarkable characteristic when we remember that they have no authority or discipline controlling their way of living. The only vice which can be charged against them is that they are somewhat slanderous. They never swear, and have not even any expression in their language which resembles an oath.

At the end of the Lake of the Forts, Bourbon river is again met with.[48] It comes down from another lake which is called Anisquaoui-gamou, meaning junction of the two seas, for the shores almost meet at the middle of the lake.[49] The country on the east side of this lake, which runs nearly north and south, is a land of dense forests, with many beaver and moose. Here the country of the Crees commences, and the climate begins to be more temperate than at Fort Bourbon. The west side of the lake is full of very fine prairies in which are many of those oxen which I have mentioned. All these regions are occupied by Assinibouels. This lake is about four hundred leagues in circuit, and it is two hundred leagues distant from the first lake.

A hundred leagues further to the west south west, following along this river, another lake occurs which they call Ouenipigouchib, or little Sea.[50] The country is nearly all the same as the preceeding one. Assinibouels, Crees and Sauteurs occupy the regions

47. Gens de la grande eau (text). The Minishînakato, a band of the Assiniboines.

48. Jérémie interchanges the names of the two main rivers flowing into Split lake, continuing name Bourbon up what we regard as the subordinate Grass r., while he assigns name Saskatchewan up what we regard as the continuation, up stream, of Nelson r.

49. The present Indian name of Landing lake. David Thompson spells it Susquagemou. It means 'where the sturgeon put their heads against the rock.' "While it is on a tributary to Nelson r., it forms part of the route from Grass r. to Nelson r. and might easily be regarded as belonging to the former stream." J. B. Tyrrell.

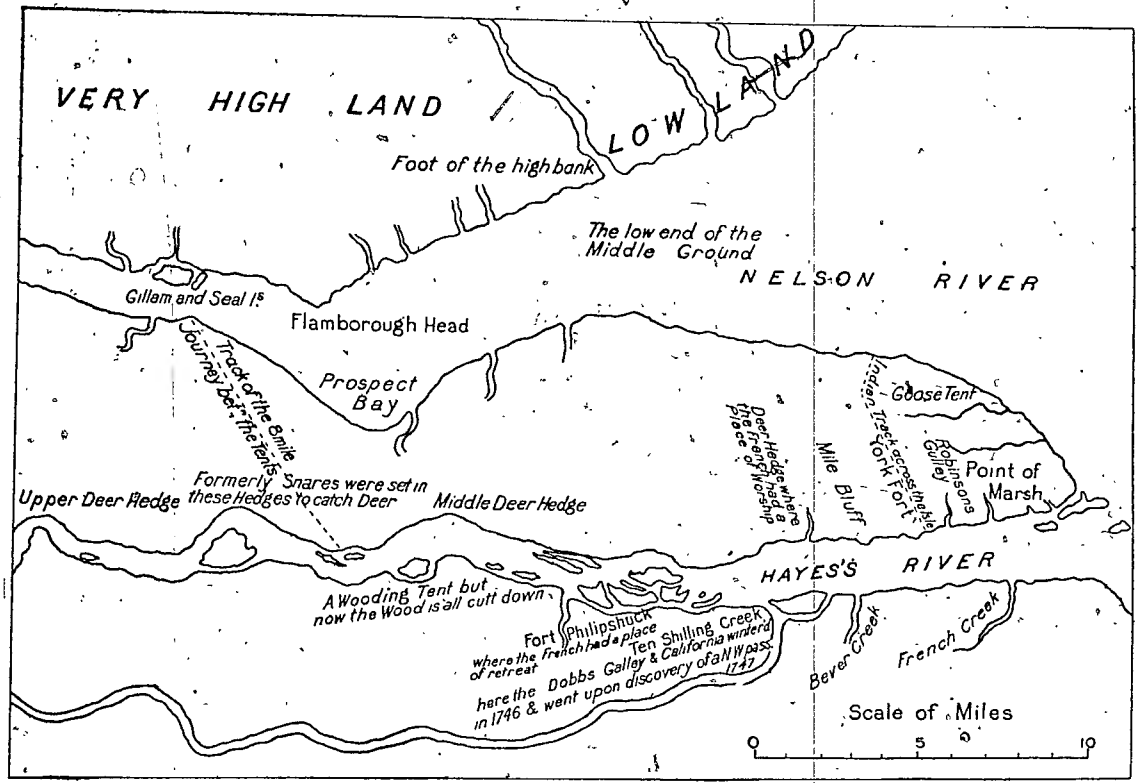
50. Winnipegosis, the suffix -isis meaning 'little'. Possibly Jérémie includes lakes Winnipegosis and Manitoba as one, for otherwise the perimeter, three quarters of lake Winnipeg, is much too great.

near this lake. It has a circuit of about three hundred leagues. At its extremity is a river which discharges into another lake called Tacamiouen, which is not so large as the others. Deer river empties into this lake, a river of such a length that our natives have never yet been able to reach its source. By this river it is possible to reach another river, which flows to the west, whereas all the others I have referred to discharge either to Hudson Bay or to the river of Canada.[51] I did all I could, while I was at Fort Bourbon, to send the natives in that direction, so as to learn if there were not some sea into which this river discharged, but they are at war with a nation which bars them from this road. I have questioned prisoners of this nation whom our natives had brought expressly to show me. They told me they were at war with another nation in the west, much further away than their own country. Those other men say that they have for neighbours men who are bearded, and who build stone forts and live in stone houses, a custom which native tribes do not follow. They say these bearded men are not dressed like them, and that they use white kettles. I showed them a silver cup, and they told me it was the same kind of thing as the others had spoken about, and they also told me that these others cultivate the land with tools of this white metal. From the way in which they describe the grain raised by these people, it must be maize.[52]

While I was at Quebec, four or five months ago, M. Bégon Intendant of Canada, did me the honour to send for me to give him whatever information I had about the country, with a view to having its discovery undertaken by way of Canada. But I think this would be much easier by the routes I have indicated, if we still hold Fort Bourbon, as the road would be much shorter and the country is nearly all good. And there would be no lack of hunting,

51. The country is now getting so far away that Jérémie has misunderstood what Indians told him. Tacamiouen is the Cree word 'kimiwan', rain. He was probably told about Cedar lake and Red Deer lake, both of which might well be described as at the extremity of Winnipegosis, and he then confused Red Deer r. flowing into Red Deer lake, with Saskatchewan r. flowing into Cedar lake and coming from the unknown west almost parallel to Red Deer r. He later refers correctly to the real Rainy lake.

52. Probably the Mandans, living far to the S. W. rather than any nation near the unknown source of Saskatchewan r. Reports that a river flowed away from Hudson bay may have been mis-interpreted as meaning it flowed west. These prisoners may have referred to Missouri r.



PORTION OF ROBSON'S MAP OF HAYES AND NELSON RIVERS, PUBLISHED IN 1752

for many animals and game can be found in all these regions, and in addition there are wild fruits, such as plums, apples, raisins and many other small fruits which I do not mention.[53]

At the south east end of this Lake Tacamamiouen there is a river discharging into another lake, called Dog lake which is not far from Lake Superior, and which our voyageurs always reach by way of the Montreal river.[54]

I shall now speak of St. Teresa river, and it will not take long to give the particulars. This river is not of great extent at its mouth, where Fort Bourbon stands; it is not over half a league wide. In 1700 a fort, called Fort Phelipeaux, was built at a place two leagues from the fort, on the south side, and also a large store-room to serve as a retreat in case of a hostile attack. The place was where the river is first intersected by islands.

Twenty leagues from the fort, the river divides into two, and the arm which comes from the north, which the natives call Apitsibi or Firesteel river (riviere du Battefeux), communicates with Bourbon river, and that is the way most of the natives travel when they come to trade, coming over a portage which they make from lac des Forts to this river. Twenty leagues above this fork is another one, coming from the south, which the natives call Guiche-Mataouang or Big Fork. This communicates with Holy Oils river (rivière des Saintes Huiles), of which I shall speak later on.[55] The arm which comes from the west, although it always bears the name St. Teresa, is yet not large. It spreads into several small streams from which it takes its source, and in all of them beaver, wolverene, marten, and other small fur animals are numerous.

53. Michel Bégon (1674-1740), Intendant 1710-1726. Jérémie's remarks are the first published opinion on the respective merits of the two great routes, but other powerful considerations always intervened. After the treaty of Utrecht the French had only the lake route, and this was also the case with the later N. W. Co., while the H. B. Co. would adhere to the bay in any event, as its interests in those days would not be served by keeping open the lake route which rivals would use

54. A hazy description of the Indian canoe route from Rainy lake, passing through Dog lake and down to lake Superior. Montreal r. here means the river system of the St. Lawrence, including Ottawa r. Jérémie is trying to complete the circuit from Ft. Bourbon around by the south.

55. Severn r., named Holy Oils by d'Iberville owing to his losing a bottle of consecrated oil. The route referred to from Hayes r. is still used, going up Shamattawa tributary, over a portage, and down Beaverdam tributary of Severn r.

Between the two forts, Bourbon and Phélipeaux, there is a little river called L'Egarée river, and by the way of this we sometimes draw firewood, which is very scarce around the fort. Lower down, close to where the river falls into the sea, is another small stream named Gargousse river, into which many porpoises enter at high tide.[56] It would be very easy to establish a fishery there, as the river is very narrow. If this fishery were once well established, more than six hundred barrels of oil could be made every year. The initial expense would probably not amount to 2,000 crowns, and the annual cost of maintaining it in good condition would not reach 2,000 livres, and this would yield a large profit, as oils are always worth money in France.[58]

Along the sea coast extending towards the bottom of Hudson bay nothing of note occurs except Holy Oils river, which is a hundred leagues to the south of Fort Bourbon. The English formerly had an establishment there for trading with the natives, but they were attacked by the French, and they set fire to their fort themselves, and burnt everything in it. They hoped to find refuge overland at Fort Bourbon, but the Canadians pursued them so vigorously that, before half the distance was covered, they were overtaken and carried off prisoners to Canada. From that time the post was abandoned until 1702 when M. de Flamanville, Commandant at Fort Bourbon, received orders from the gentlemen of the Canada Company to send his brother M. de Beaumenil to re-establish it.[58] He built a small house, but the post was maintained for only two years, as it cost the Company more than it yielded in profit.

56. L'Egarée, Ten Shilling creek. Gargousse, French creek.

57. The écu (crown) was an old French coin varying in value from 3 to 6 francs; the livre was nearly a franc. Both coins were superseded in 1795 on the introduction of the metric system.

58. The English post was Fort New Severn, established in 1686. "This London company . . . having given orders to the governor of Fort New Severn to burn all their effects if the French should appear, they effectively burnt the fort and more than 30,000 crowns worth of merchandize, on the appearance of a single vessel in 1690 (it was commanded by d'Iberville) and re-built the fort in the following year because the Quebec company was not in a condition to occupy it." (Compagnie du Nord to Pontchartrain 1693, quoted by Lindsey, p. 139). "The Company have received intelligence this year that the French have made another establishment at New Severn, so that we have not received above one fifth of the returns usually had from thence" (i. e. from Albany). (H. B. Co. to Lds. of Trade, 19 Jan. 1702, quoted by Mills, p. 301.)

Although beaver are numerous at the head of this river, and the natives who would come to trade are many, yet we might also even attract a large proportion of those who traffic with the English, and who live at the lower parts of the bay. This river is very shallow at its mouth, so that ships of only fifty or sixty tons can enter. It would be easy enough to live there, as wood is more common than at any of the other places which I have mentioned.

I shall say nothing of the mainland along this bay in the direction of the post occupied by the English,[59] and commonly called the bottom of the bay, for never having been there myself, I could speak only from hearsay. But if you wish, Sir, I shall have a talk when I am in Canada, with people who have been there several times, and on my return I shall have the honour of giving you all the information I get from them.

To finish what I have undertaken I shall return to Fort Bourbon, the first subject of my memoir. And I may say that this post is very advantageously placed for its business, provided it is well maintained. A very profitable trade can be had with the natives when the goods they want are on hand. The Fort is situate in 57 degrees north latitude, and consequently the cold is extreme in winter, and winter begins at Michælmas, and does not end until the month of May. In December the sun sets at 2.45, and rises at 9.15.[60] Whenever the day happens to be fine and the cold is a little moderated, the hunters kill as many partridges and hares as they please. One year when M. de la Grange, captain of the King's Transport Service,[61] spent the winter at Fort Bourbon with his company, we interested ourselves in keeping count of how many he

59. Ft. Albany, established 1675, captured by d'Iberville 1686, retaken by the English 1693, and thereafter never lost. It was the only post held by the H. B. Co. while Jérémie was at Ft. Bourbon.

60. Sun rises at York Factory, at mid-winter, at 8h. 50 m. and sets at 3 h. 10 m., sun's time, making length of day 6 h. 20 m. At mid-summer the figures are reversed, making the day 17 h. 40 m.

61. Jean Leger de la Grange, born 1663 near Limoges, surgeon, sailor, trader, best known for seamanship. For several years accompanied the transports from France on account of his knowledge of navigation of the St. Lawrence. For this reason Jérémie describes him as 'capitaine du flute du roi.' A mis-translation of the word 'flute' has led more than one modern author to indulge in an account of fancied revelries at Fort Bourbon. La Grange armed two barques at Quebec in 1704, under letter of marque, and captured several English ships off Newfoundland. The winter he spent at Fort Bourbon was probably 1709-10, when Jérémie states the ships had to winter there.

brought to the fort during winter. When spring had come, we made out that the eighty men whom we numbered, garrison and company, had eaten 90,000 partridges and 25,000 hares.[62]

At the end of April geese, brant and ducks arrive, and remain there for several months. So numerous are they that a person can kill as many as he wishes, and when the garrison hunters are busy, we send out the natives to hunt, giving them a pound of powder and four pounds of lead for twenty ducks or brant, and these they have to bring to the fort.

During this season caribou are plentiful. These animals pass twice a year. The first time is in the months of April and May, on which occasion they come from the north and go south. The number of them is almost countless. They occupy an extent of country of more than sixty leagues from the sea coast along these rivers. The roads they make in the snow as they pass form a closer net work than the streets of Paris. The natives make barriers of trees, heaped one on the other, leaving openings at intervals, and across these they stretch snares, and in this way they catch many. These animals return to the north in the months of July and August and, when they are crossing the rivers, the natives in their canoes spear as many of them as they please. Fishing may also be enjoyed in the summer. Nets are stretched, and very good fish are taken such as pike, trout, carp and what we call whitefish. This looks somewhat like a white herring, but it is unquestionably the best fish in all the world. Supplies are made for the winter by packing these fish in the snow, as well as any meat we wish to keep. When they are frozen they do not spoil until they thaw out. In the same way geese, ducks and brant are preserved for winter, when they are roasted with partridges and hares, so that this country, although it has a bad climate, gives us a good living when Europe helps us out with bread and wine. Although the summer is very short, we had a small garden which never failed to produce very good lettuce, green cabbage, and other small herbs which we used for making soup in winter.

Although the people living in all these regions are very easy to manage and at heart are friendly to the French, yet in 1712 I had to send a party of my own people to hunt caribou as they passed

62. Foxe says he had heard that Button's crew, during winter 1611-12 at Port Nelson, killed 1,800 dozen partridges and other fowl.

in July and August, for I had received no help from France since I had left there in 1708, and I had not enough food or powder to hunt game with guns. I had sent off my lieutenant, the two clerks and the best men in the garrison, and I had to give them a good supply of powder and of French rations. Unfortunately they camped near a party of natives who were starving and who had no powder, as I did not want to trade it, but wished to keep it as a safeguard for my own life and the lives of my men. These natives, considering themselves dared by the reckless way my men were shooting every kind of game, and feasting before their eyes without sharing anything, made a plot to kill them, and seize what they had.

There were two of the Frenchmen whom they feared more than the others, and to get rid of them more easily, they invited them to a night revel in their cabins. The two Frenchmen went there, without any suspicion of the trap which had been laid for them. The other six slept peacefully, supposing themselves to be in perfect safety, and knowing nothing of the treachery plotted against them. When the guests at this dread banquet were going to go back to their camp, the traitors surrounded them with daggers[63] and big knives in their hands, and stabbed them, unarmed as they were, without a chance for their lives. When they had killed these two, they hurriedly planned to cut the throats of the others while they were asleep. Fire-arms and daggers were made ready, and they went to kill the poor sleepers. First firing off their guns, and then, daggers in hands, throwing themselves on the men, they cut their throats before they were well awake. One man, however, who had received only a bullet through one thigh, feigned to be dead, and the murderers, seeing him motionless, contented themselves with taking his shirt off as quickly as they could, as they had done with the others, and then, pillaging what they could find, they made off at once for fear of being surprised.

When the supposed dead man had recovered his senses a little and heard no more noise, he raised his head and saw all his poor countrymen stretched lifeless. He dragged himself as best he could to the edge of the wood. There he tried to raise himself, and found then that he had received only a flesh wound. As he was losing all

63. Bayonnettes (text), used by Jérémie in its seventeenth century meaning—a short flat dagger.

his blood he stopped up his wounds with the leaves of trees, and set out for the fort through brambles and thorns, as naked as an infant just born.

After making ten leagues in this wretched condition, he reached the fort at nine o'clock in the evening, covered with blood, and with his poor body all lacerated. Imagine, Sir, our surprise, and my perplexity when he told us that all his companions were dead. At once I put everything in a state of defence and got the artillery ready, for I was sure these traitors would make some attempt on the fort. As there remained only nine of us, including the chaplain, the surgeon and a small boy, I could not possibly guard the two posts. I rallied around me the small garrison which was left, and kept a good watch night and day, without daring to go outside our fort. These barbarians, hungry for goods, came to Fort Phelipeaux where they found nobody, and everything they came across they plundered and ravaged. Eleven hundred pounds of powder, which I had not time to get taken to Fort Bourbon, was carried away by them, and it was all that we had left. We spent all the winter in the fort, not daring to go out, without food and without powder, and expecting we would die of hunger and misery, while all the time we were in dread of seeing these murderous wretches at our gate, but they have not since appeared.

In 1713 the gentlemen of the Company sent a ship which brought us all kinds of delicacies and also trading goods, which the natives greatly needed, for they had been in a bad way for four years, as I had no more goods to trade. As a result, many of them died of hunger, for they had lost their skill with the bow since Europeans had supplied them with fire-arms. They have no other resource to live on except the game they kill with guns, for they know nothing about cultivating the land and raising vegetables. Always wanderers, they never stay a week in the same place. When at the point of starvation, the father and mother kill their children and eat them, and then the stronger of the two eats the other. I have seen a man who had eaten his wife and their six children, and he said his heart had not failed him until he came to eat the last child, as he loved him more than the others, and when he was opening the head to eat the brains, he was touched by the natural affection of a father for his children, and had not strength to break the bones to suck the marrow.

Although these people suffer much misery, yet they live to be very old, and when they reach such an age as to be altogether decrepit and past doing any work, they arrange to have a banquet, if they have the means, and invite all their family to it. The aged man, after making a long harangue in which he exhorts them to live amicably together, chooses the particular child whom he likes best, and hands him a cord which he himself passes around his neck. He begs this child to strangle him and so remove him from this world where he is only a burden to others. The dutiful child does not fail to obey his father at once, and strangles him as quickly as he can. The old men think they are fortunate to die at this age because, as they say, when they die at a great age, they are born again in the other world as infants at the breast, and so they live through all eternity. But when they die young, they are born again old, and thus they are always handicapped, as are all old people.

They have no kind of religion; each makes a god after his own fashion, and to him they have recourse in their need, and especially when they are sick. This imaginary god is the only one to whom they appeal when they invoke him by singing and howling around a sick person, the while making contortions and grimaces enough to make the patient die. There are professional singers among them, and in these they have as much confidence as we have in our doctors and surgeons. So blind are they in their belief of what these charlatans tell them that they dare not refuse them anything, and when a young woman or girl is seeking a cure, the singer will do nothing before he has been given a favour. Although these people live in the last stage of ignorance, they have confused knowledge of the creation of the world and of the deluge, and the old men make up most absurd stories about such matters for the younger ones, and they listen to them very attentively. They take as many wives as they can find, and especially sisters, saying that they get on better among themselves than if they were strangers.

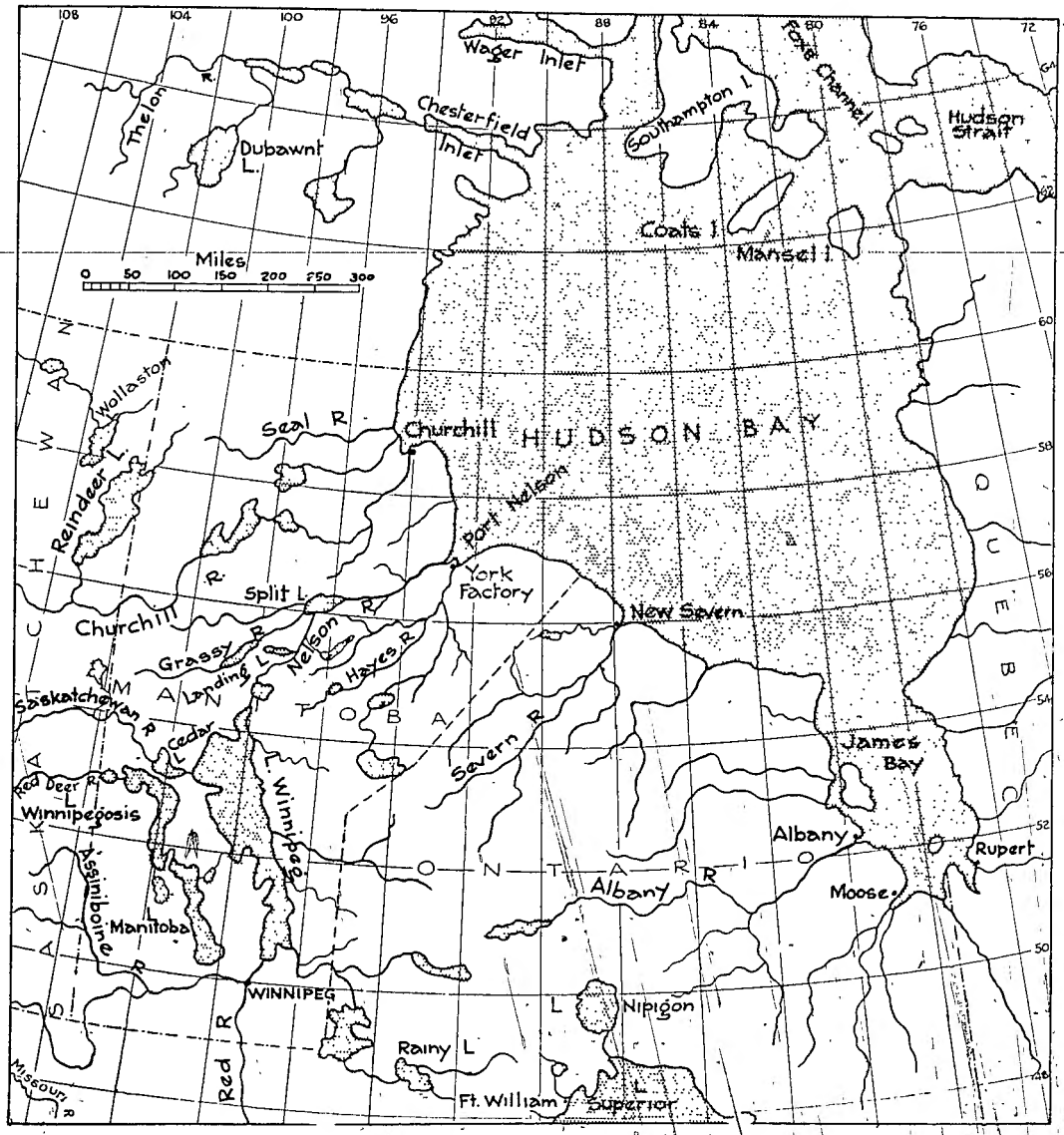
Great kindness is shown by them to widows and orphans, everything they have being given with great unselfishness. So all of them are equally rich, everything moveable being practically common to them all. Their tents are made of moose skin or caribou, carried on their backs in the summer, and dragged over the snow in winter, when they move camp from one place to another. They use snowshoes to walk on the snow, like the natives of Canada.

Beaver are plentiful in these regions, but it is surprising to see what trouble the natives have in catching them in winter, for the skin is worth nothing in summer, as it has no hair. The ice has to be broken with axes and other iron tools, sometimes in more than a hundred places, and in the middle of winter the ice is four or five feet thick, or even more. These animals display a very singular instinct in the way they make their houses. A small river is chosen, and they dam it at its narrowest part, and so hold back the water. This forms a reservoir, and they build a house on its bank, covering the house thickly with earth so that the cold will not get through. Branches of trees are piled up by them, and in the winter they eat the bark on these. They have different rooms in their houses, and never eat where they sleep, for fear of making the place untidy. In the day time they never go near their beds, except when they want to sleep. Usually there are two, four or six of them in these houses, always an even number, males and females. One of them is the master, and it is his business to make the others work, and if any one is lazy it is beaten by the others to such an extent that it has to leave, and look for a home elsewhere.

Beaver have very short legs, so much so that their body always drags on the ground. They have four very large teeth, two upper and two lower, and with these they cut wood so easily that in a very short space of time thay cut down a tree as big as a man's body. Their tail is flat like a mason's trowel, and they carry earth and build their houses and dams with it, working more industriously than men will do.

In addition to the beaver, which are numerous, there are wolverenes, bears, marten, pakans, moose or elk, in a word, every kind of animal which has a skin sought after in France. Judging by my own experience in business I consider that this post would yield 100,000 livres a year, over and above all expenses, if it were well supplied with goods and were still a French possession. In 1713 I was not sent 8,000 livres worth of goods in all, and in 1714 I made over 120,000 livres, and brought that much away with me when I was relieved by the English.[64] This post, in my opinion, would be one of the best in America, even if a very small amount were spent on it.

64. The treaty of Utrecht provided that "it may be entirely free to the Company of Quebec and all other subjects (of France) to go wither-soever they please out of the bay, together with all their goods, merchandize, (etc.) of what nature soever." As soon as peace was signed, and incidentally the sea had become free, the French company sent out a large cargo to be traded off for fur which Jérémie brought away the following year.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Wager Inlet
Foxe Channel
Hudson Strait
Southampton I.
Chesterfield Inlet
Thelon
Dubawnt L.
Coats I.
Mansel I.
Miles
0 50 100 150 200 250 300
Wollaston
Seal R.
Churchill
HUDSON BAY
Reindeer L.
Port Nelson
York Factory
Split L.
Churchill R.
New Severn
Grassy Landing
Nelson R.
Hayes R.
Saskatchewan R.
MANITOBA
Cedar L.
Severn R.
James Bay
Red Deer R.
Winnipegosis
L. Winnipeg
Albany R.
Albany
Rupert
Moose
Assiniboine R.
Manitoba
WINNIPEG
Nipigon L.
Rainy L.
Red R.
Ft. William
Superior L.
Missouri R.