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A short V I E W of the C O U N T R I E S and  
T R A D E carried on by the Company in *Hudson's-  
Bay*; shewing the Prejudice of that exclusive Trade,  
and Benefit which will accrue to *Great-Britain*, by open-  
ing and extending that Trade, and settling those  
Countries.

**T**HIS great inland Sea of *Hudson's Bay*, which extends from  $51^{\circ} 30'$  to  $66^{\circ}$  North Latitude, is above 1000 *English Miles* from North to South, and about 700 in its greatest Breadth from East to West, was first discovered by Capt. *Hudson* in 1610, who wintered in the Bottom of the Bay in *Rupert's* or *Frenchman's River*; and the Northwest, West, and South Parts of the Bay were afterwards fully discovered by Sir *Thomas Button*, *Fox*, and *James*, in 1616, and in 1632.

The Adventurers, who afterwards petitioned for, and obtained the present Charter, fitted out the *Nonsuch* Ketch in 1668, under Capt. *Gillam*, who sailed into *Hudson's Bay*, by the same Course of *Hudson*, and wintered in the same, or in the adjoining River, he was in, which he called *Rupert's River*. By which it appears the *Hudson's Bay* Company were not the first Discoverers, as was set forth in their late Case, nor had made any new Discovery, when they petitioned for their Charter; and their Expence in fitting out a small Ketch was very inconsiderable. However, as they proposed to extend the Trade, and to endeavour to find out a Passage to the Western *American Ocean*, King *Charles* the II. granted to them a Charter, with a perpetual Property of Lands without any Limits, and an exclusive Right of Trade for ever, to all the Countries they should discover by Land or by Water, as far as he could grant it by a Royal Charter, without an Act of Parliament; with Intention that they should extend the Trade, and at least determine whether there is a Passage to the South-Sea, or not; and that they should settle and make it a Colony, which was to be called *Prince Rupert's Land*.

The Trade to these extensive Countries having been thus confined to a few, for 79 Years, and the Benefit to the Nation being very small, was the Occasion of the present Enquiry, whether that Trade might not be greatly extended, in Case it were laid open, and these Countries settled; and to know what Right the Company have to that extensive Trade and Monopoly.

It now appears from the Papers produced by the Company, that their original Stock in 1676, amounted to 10500 *l.* it appears also by the Journals of Parliament, that on the 7th of *April*, in the Year 1690, the Company petitioned the Commons to confirm their Charter by Act of Parliament; suggesting that they had been at great Expence in making Factories, and had been dispossessed by the *French* in Time of Peace; and computed their Losses at 150000 *l.* for which they could have no Redress in the late Reign. (But how they could have lost 150000 *l.* upon their Capital of 10500 *l.* does not appear) and finding they could not secure their exclusive Trade from *English* Interlopers; and that the Trade could not be carried on without a joint Stock, they prayed for Leave to bring in a Bill to secure their Trade; upon which a Bill was allowed to be brought in—But the Felt-makers on the 28th, and the Merchants trading to *New-York* and *New-England* on the 13th of *May*, and some Merchants whose Ship had been seized for attempting to trade within *Hudson's* Streights on the 5th, having presented Petitions, shewing how prejudicial it would be to *England* and their Colonies, to have that Monopoly and exclusive Trade confirm'd by Parliament; upon the third Reading of the Bill, a Rider was prepared and offered, to limit the Act to a short Term of Years, which was carried to be filled up with fourteen Years, and to the End of the next Session of Parliament, and no longer; but was amended by the Lords, and made for seven Years, and to the End of the next Session of Parliament.—At the same Time that the Commons passed it, and sent it up to the Lords, they came into a Resolution, which they made a standing Order of the House, that no Bill should be brought in to confirm any Charter, unless the Copy of the Charter should be annexed to the Bill.

As that Act expired in 1698, the Company have had no legal Right to that exclusive Trade from that Time, nor have ever since attempted to get it renewed.—In 1708, upon an Act passing to open the *American* Trade to the Colonies on the East Coast of *America*, and in 1745, in the Bill for giving a Premium to such as should discover a Passage to the Western *American Ocean*, there were negative Clauses inserted, that these Acts should not prejudice the Estate or

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The Company, after getting this Act of Parliament, in the Year 1691 came to a Resolution of tripling their Stock, not by a Subscription or Call upon the Subscribers for Cash, but by calling each 100 *l.* originally subscribed, 300 *l.* which nominally raised their Stock from 10500 *l.*  
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to 31500 *l.* Upon this imaginary Stock they traded from that Time to the Peace of *Utrecht*, when *York Fort* upon *Hay's River* was restored to them by the *French*, they having only possessed *Albany Fort* during *Queen Anne's War*.

In 1718 they built a new Factory at *Churchil River*, and still traded upon that nominal Capital of 31500 *l.*—In the Year 1720, in *August*, when the South-sea and other Bubbles were at the Height, the Company called a general Court, and again tripled their nominal Stock, calling each 100 *l.* of their 31500 *l.* nominal Capital, 300 *l.* and determined to take in a real Subscription to enable them to extend and increase their Trade: Upon which, 10 per cent. was actually paid in, amounting to 3150 *l.* and 10 per cent. was ordered to be paid in from 3 Months to 3 Months, until the whole was paid in; and at the same Time their nominal Stock being tripled, was called 94500—which by the future Calls was intended to be tripled by a Payment in Cash, to extend their Trade; but as the South-sea Stock and other Bubbles fell by the End of *August*, the Company called another Court, and cancelled their former Orders for the further Payments; but as 3150 *l.* had been paid in, upon the first Payment of 10 per cent. for each 10 *l.* paid in, they allowed them 30 *l.* in Stock, which amounted to 9450 *l.* which added to the 94500 *l.* makes their nominal Stock given into the Committee, 103950 *l.* at present.

It from hence plainly appears, that in 1720 the Company were of Opinion, that the *Hudson's Bay Trade* could have been greatly extended; and that they could have employed near 300,000 *l.* in that Trade, by proper Management; otherwise they must allow they intended it as a Bubble, to cheat the Subscribers of all the Money to be called in.

The Company allow they have divided upon this nominal Stock from 8 to 10 per cent. which upon their real Stock of 13650 *l.* is from 60 to 80 per cent. at the same Time all the Exports from *Britain*, employed in Trade, deducting the Provisions and Stores for their Servants in the Factories, by their Returns to the Committee, as well as from the Custom-House, are only from 3000 *l.* to 4000 *l.* annually—So that their Stock in Trade is not above 4000 *l.* to those extensive Countries, which by proper Management might be carried into half the Northern Continent of *America*, by the Rivers and Lakes; not the tenth Part of what some single Merchants export to some of our Colonies in *America*; and all the Return to *Britain*, exclusive of the Expence, amounts to only 8356 *l.* per ann. or 8 per cent. Gain to the Proprietors upon their nominal Stock. It also appears by the Company's Returns, and by the Evidence before the Committee, that they have only four Factories, called Forts, three of Wood and one of Stone, at *Moose*, in 51° 30', at *Albany* in 52°, at *Hay's River* in 57°, and at *Churchil* in 59°, and a small House at *Slide River* in 52°, on the East-main, and *Henly House* 150 Miles above *Albany* Factory; about 120 Servants in all the Factories, of which there are 16 in the two small Houses.

It appears by Evidence, that the *French* have a trading settled Factory at *St. Germain*, upon *Abiibis Lake*, in about 50°, near the Head of *Moose River*, within 100 Miles of that Factory; and that they from thence send their *Coureur du Bois* to the Westward, to the Rivers *Albany*, *Nelson*, and *Churchil*, at a considerable Distance above the Company's Factories; where they intercept the Natives, and get all the lightest and best Furs from them, by giving them better Prices there, in their hunting Countries, than the Company's Servants give at their Factories, after all their Labour and Loss of Time, in carrying them to the Factories, as appears by the Company's Standard of Trade, compared with the *French* Standard; and the further Benefit the Company make upon the overplus Trade, which they sell above Standard.

It appears also by Evidence, that the Company take only such Furs and Skins as the Natives carry down to the Factories, in small Canoes made of Bark, or upon Sledges in Winter; but never allow any of their Servants to go up into the Country to trade with the Natives, or to have any Intercourse with them, nor contrive any Method to carry up *British* Goods to the Natives, and to receive bulky and heavy Goods from them, in their own Countries, and so convey them down in Floats and Boats to Places where the Shipping may receive them; by which Means many more Furs, Skins, and other Commodities might be brought to Market, the Natives having no proper Boats to carry them to the Factories.

It appears also by the Company's Return, and by Evidence to the Committee, that they have never made any Settlement or Improvement in the Countries, except in their Factories, nor have given or offered any Incouragement to *British* Subjects, to settle and plant in the Bay, under Pretence of the Severity of the Weather and Climate; though it appears, by Evidence, that Garden Heibs and Roots grow in Perfection at most of their Factories, and Barley, Oats, and Rye have ripened very well at *Moose* Factory, and Wheat survived the Winter; and that the Summer is longer and Climate warmer within Land, at a distance from the Shore, and the Soil very good for Tillage, and breeding of Cattel, Horses, &c. So that by not settling the Country, and raising Grain and Stock, the Company are at a great Expence in maintaining their Servants and Shipping, which might be much lessened. Their Expences upon 4000 *l.* Export amounting, by their Account, to near 16000 *l.* and no more than three or four Ships under two hundred Tun Burthen are employed annually.

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That upon Numbers settling there, expensive Forts will be no longer necessary, either against Natives or Foreigners. That most Part of the Countries around the Bay are in temperate Climates, great Part of it proper for Tillage, and Cattle may be bred and kept in all Parts of it: That the Countries South and West of the Bay are equally temperate within Land as in the Continent of *Europe*, in the same Latitudes; by their being nearer the Western-Ocean than the East-Coast of *America*; the prevailing Westerly Winds are not so cold, and the Country being not mountainy, but overspread with navigable Rivers and Lakes, it can't be so cold as mountainy Countries in the same Latitudes; and still further to the Westward and Southward, within Land, the Country is warmer and more habitable, and the Spring and Summers longer; and the Climate would be still improving by cutting down the Woods, and tilling and draining the Lands. That the Natives being civilized, and well used, and giving them better Prices for their Furs, would live more at their Ease, and increase in Number, by living in Peace with each other, would then become industrious, and want more *European* Goods, which would oblige them to hunt, in the proper Seasons only, for Furs, and to extend their Trade backwards to procure other Commodities for the *European* Goods; which upon living in settled Towns they would want to supply themselves with Cloaths and Furniture.

The Committee having called for all the Journals and Charts from the Company of what Discoveries they had made, either within Land or by Sea, to discover the Countries or the Passage to the Western *American* Ocean, all the Charts produced were an old Chart of the Bay, a Chart of *Churchil Harbour*, and of the Branches of *Nelson* and *Hay's Rivers* for some few Miles from the Sea; and a small Chart of *Hudson's Bay* lately published, wherein *Henly House* was noted, but none of the late Discoveries on the North-West of the Bay: There were only four Journals produced of Discoveries to the Northward from *Churchil* by Sea, viz. *Kelsey's*, as far as *Whale Cove* in 1719, *Scrog's* in 1722, who failed as far as *Whalebone Bay*, in near 65°, to enquire after the Ships that were sent upon a Discovery under *Barlow* and *Vaughan*, along with Governor *Knight*; and the Journals of *Napier* and *Crow*, who failed as far as *Whale Cove* in 1737, under Pretence of making a Discovery, at Mr. *Dobbs's* Solicitation of Sir *Byby Lake*. By *Kelsey's* Journal, it appears, he only went upon fixing *Churchil's* Factory, to find out *Indians* to trade with the Factory, and to promote a Trade with the *Esquimaux* near *Whale Cove*, where no Passage was expected; *Norton* having gone, at the same time, almost as far by Land; *Scrog's* was not sent upon a Discovery, but only to enquire after the Ships with *Knight*, he only touching at *Marble Island*, going and returning from *Whalebone Bay*, where he was forced in by a Southerly Wind in a Fog, and never attempted to search the Western Coast for any Inlet or Passage; having only discovered Part of a Wreck with the *Indians*, he saw on *Marble Island*, supposed to have been of one of the Ships lost there. By *Napier's* and *Crow's* Journals, it appears, that they failed from *Churchil* on the 7th of *July*, 1737, went as far as *Whale Cove* in 62° 30'. the Journals, they consulted whether, since the Natives were gone, and they could have no more Trade, they should not go upon the discovery as far as 63° 30'. but as they were ordered to return by the 24th, as their Time was expired, they resolved to return to *Churchil*; so that they, by their Instructions, were only allowed seventeen Days to sail from *Churchil*, to make a Discovery, which was all employed in sailing to *Whale Cove*, and trading there; So that it appears, that the Ships under *Knight*, were the only Vessels ever sent upon the Discovery of a Passage in seventy nine Years, and these being lost, none can tell how much they discovered.

The Company produced only one Journal of an inland Discovery, in 1691, made by *Kelsey*, when he was a Boy, up *Nelson's River*, a cross the Country, when they fixed a Factory at *Port Nelson*, to endeavour to acquaint the Natives with it, and to draw them down to trade at their Factory. The Company also gave in a Paper of *Norton's* being sent, upon a like Design, to the Northern *Indians*, beyond *Seal River*, when they, in 1719, fixed a Factory at *Churchil* River, when he was a young Boy: So that no beneficial Discovery or Observations of the Country could be made by them, or any proper Knowledge of the Soil or Climate; as these were the only Steps taken to extend the Trade by Sea or Land, or to make Discoveries, except the building *Henly House* five or six Years ago, up *Albany River*, to endeavour to intercept the *French* Trade, though with little Effect. It must from their Account plainly appear, that they never intended seriously to extend the Trade, or discover the inland Countries, or effectually discover whether there was a navigable Passage to the Western Ocean of *America*; since many Inlets were seen and entered into by the Ships sent upon the late Discovery, in one Voyage, which were unknown to the Company, after being seventy eight Years in Possession of their Charter, and Observations made, which gave still great Hopes of their being a navigable Passage to the South Sea, through these Inlets.

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From these Facts, it is evident, that by opening the Trade, and giving a Freedom to all his Majesty's Subjects to settle and plant these Countries, and to trade and hunt with the Natives, as in other proprietary Colonies, that most of this Expence may be saved, and our Commodities afforded to the Natives at reasonable Value, so as to undersell the *French*, and oblige them to quit the Trade, at such a Distance from *Canada*, where Carriage is so expensive and tedious.

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