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Hudson's Bay Company.

INCORPORATED 2ND MAY 1670.

SECTION B

CLASS 194

SUB-DIVISION e

PIECE 8

DESCRIPTION SAULT Ste MARIE

REPORT on DISTRICT

1835

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SAULT Ste MARIE

REPORT 1835.

8
1835

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B.194/e/8
1835
HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

Notes

I have paid due attention to your wishes expressed to me at Michipicotton in regard to any thing that might appear to me to lead to improvements in the mode of conducting the business here: But before I enter on the subject, permit me to premise that it is far from my wish to imply by any thing I am about to say that the change I mean to propose could have been accomplish'd with the same facility at any previous Period. From the new arrangement with regard to keeping a Years Stock always on hand the business will now be placed upon a footing that would have in a short time suggested to any one some change in the mode of conducting, and it has probably occurred to me thus early from it being my duty to apply my mind to this business, and from the information I have derived since I came here. From a circumstance that came to my knowledge this Summer I am led to anticipate that some change in the mode of carrying on the Transport business to and fro Michipicotton will ere long be forced upon us, and it may therefore be the more proper, to take time as it were by the forelock. A complaint had been made to Sir John Colborne against the Free Canadians and Half Breeds settled on this side the River, and altho' some of their Complaints are incorrect, others can not be denied; the petty Grog shops are a great nuisance, in the neighbourhood of the missionary Establishment, and you would observe from my letter of 24th October to the Honbl. Company's agent at LaChine, acquainting that Charles Kaiomion and Crew after leaving the House at St. Marys put a shore a little below and got all intoxicated, that we have equal cause for complaint on that score. The Lieutt. Governor was so highly incensed that he directed Colonel Gurns of the Indian department to write to Mr. Bethune to investigate the matter and report upon it, and threatened if the complaints proved correct to have all the "Squatters" removed. Now although Mr. Bethunes report is not unfavorable to them generally there are as I have said before Complaints that are undeniable — fresh causes of complaint have since arisen, and will of course reach Sir John Colborne, who at last will in all probability order their removal: preparations are now making to erect Houses for the Indians behind the Mission House, and no disagreeable neighbours will I think be suffered to locate themselves near this Indian Village.

I have made many notes on the Subject, but should wish to see my way more clearly before offering what might prove but crude and erroneous opinions in respect to some matters: however am clearly of opinion, that were it possible to devise

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other means not more expensive than the present of transporting the supplies hence to Michipicotton, the other expences might be put upon a more stable and economical footing. With regard to a change in the mode of transport, I feel a reluctance to offer any suggestion; as it might so much depend on the means at the Command of others of which I can form perhaps but an imperfect estimate — and one plan that has occurred to me from its probable advantages in a pecuniary point of view might be subject to objection in point of propriety. With regard to the expences incurred for occasional day Labourers I am persuaded a saving might be easily effected granting that the Freemen could be dispensed with for the transport: the present mode of hiring the Freemen as day Labourers for Work, which the present establishment of Men cannot perform is perhaps unavoidable so long as we require to employ them in the Summer Transport as that alone might be no sufficient inducement for them to continue steadily inclined to serve us; but it has so many disadvantages that I feel confident a change would be of much benefit as it forms a considerable item in the expences of this Establishment. Our firewood alone costling nearly the wages of one Man for the a Year, and I go much below the mark, when I state the expences for other day Laborers under ordinary Circumstances at twice as much with Rations to boot, and in some cases this last has been much more, besides we are under a state of thraldom as things are now: the Freemen here knowing we can not do without them are often very saucy: to keep them in humour Credits are often given to them — and money often lost: were we able to do without them no such risks would be incurred, and some saving might be effected.

You will see from a paper accompanying this the amount of Wages alone expended for temporary or day labor, and from the difference of that amount in different Years, how uncertain such expences are. I do not see, why this should not be upon the same footing, as all others of the Companys Posts, where this description of expence is regulated and limited by the Governor and Council so as to make it a certain instead of an uncertain expence. The very apparent increase of this charge in the years 1839 & 1840 can only be accounted for by the expences that have been incurred in those two Years on account of repairs about the Establishment, which was getting into a very dilapidated state, and which would require a good deal to be done even after the present year: not that any considerable repairs were commenced previous to the present year, but preparations were made — People were employed to saw Boards, make Shingles &c. and when I inform you, that Boards of 1 Inch cost £5 — and Plank of 2 Inches £7.10 — ⅌ hundred I leave you to judge whether you would feel any great favor for this kind of Labour. After giving it every consideration, I see no other remedy than

that I would humbly suggest, that an additional Man should be allowed to this Post, with this addition the present expence of procuring Firewood would be saved and other expences might be greatly reduced: when I say that other expences might be greatly reduced, I mean that every thing that can be considered as expences about the Establishment hitherto the most chargeable and fluctuating of all the expences. Of course when Vessels arrived with the Supplies an extra hand or two might be required to unload but this would amount to a very trifling sum, and in the event of the Habitants being removed, Indians or People from the other side might be had. That the addition of one Man to the permanent Establishment will have the desired effect, I suspect will be doubted by others, who may consider that I have underrated the difficulties to be overcome with an additional Man in place of the present day Labourers — but if I differ in opinion it is because I firmly believe the means would be adequate to the end. It may appear surprising that what I have stated should be in contradiction to a commonly received opinion that the hiring of Laborers for occasional jobs and discharging them when the work was done ought to be cheaper than keeping yearly Servants, and so it would were both paid at the same rate, but when it is considered, that the daily wages of the one is 2/6 Hx. Cy. and of the other 12½ and that at least 25 ⅌ is expended in addition to the former sum which remains as an unpaid Debt not altogether lost perhaps, but of so uncertain a character as not to admit of its being fairly taken into account, it must be evident, that if instead of employing a number of temporary Laborers at stated times, the quantity of whose labor amounted altogether to the work of one Man for a year — a yearly Servant was substituted, the same work might be done (not so promptly of course but within the year) at a cost of two thirds less.

It may be said that the work to be done in this way, has in some years exceeded the constant labor of one Man for a year — this I admit, by my remedy for that is — that this extra Man with the others should be constantly employed in keeping the Buildings, Wharfes, Bridges, Fences &c. in repair, so as to leave no arrears of previous years to be accomplished by the future, as in the case of the last and present Years. There is another objection, which I feel myself less able to get over — Every Commissioned Gentleman is entitled I believe to the Services of one Man as a domestic; few might be inclined to dispense with this — in that case many of my calculations might not be realized in the first years. I have considered the three Men as available for the purpose of getting through all the repairs now much required, after they have been accomplished the ordinary work of the place might admit of one

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being employed in addition to other duties in those of a domestic nature.

I mention this, because this Post having so long been under the management of a Commissioned Gentleman, might be so again, and it might be considered unfair on my part to promise results, that another could not realize. A Clerk in charge of a Post is I believe allowed the same privilege — and altho' I have not availed myself of this in consequence of the work required to be done, I should not wish to entail upon another; an inconvenience, which I have borne because it is merely temporary.

I have thus endeavored to meet some of the objections that have occurred to me and others, I candidly admit I can not get over — the remedy in that case (supposing my reasoning in other respects to be correct and the plan proposed to be worth a trial) remains to be provided for at all events; and under the most unfavorable circumstances I think, there can be no doubt that a saving can be effected, when the means of transporting the Supplies have been otherwise provided.

Were anything required besides the pecuniary advantages, to enforce the utility of such a change I would add, that in my humble judgment the present manner of effecting this business is subject to no sufficiently limiting Control, or in other words a Clerk in charge of this Post, finds himself situated as I do now with no other Guide in regard to the business, than his own judgment formed on the previous Customs of the place, and without any guarantee from Censure, should his acts meet with disapproval.

It may perhaps be said, that all the saving to be effected is too trifling to be worth serious consideration: That small savings however may lead to a greater is an Axiom as self evident as any other.

To a humble Individual like myself, who has no larger Field to improve upon, small objects will naturally present themselves magnified perhaps to dimensions incommensurate with their importance — the motive however I trust will plead strongly in my behalf, and I do no more than follow the conviction of my Mind, when I rely with confidence on your estimating my humble opinions with candour & impartiality.

Sault St. Marys
5th Jany. 1835

Wm. Nourse

Agreeably to a hint communicated to me in a prior dispatch (dated 29th Ult.o) from Mr. Nourse, I sent an additional Man thither on the 10th inst.o, to enable him to get the most important repairs effected this Season

Michipicoton 16 Jany. 1835.

G. Keith

Cost of Labor &c at Sault St. Marys.

Paid on account of Transport, Expresses &c	1832	£ 75. 10. —
	1833	" 111. 6. 7
	1834	" 54. 17. 6
do. do. " Labor &c	1832	49. 3. 6
	1833	86. 1. 10
	1834	70. 4. 7
Outstanding debts	1832	12. 10. 9
	1833	25. 14. 6
	1834	25. 5. 6

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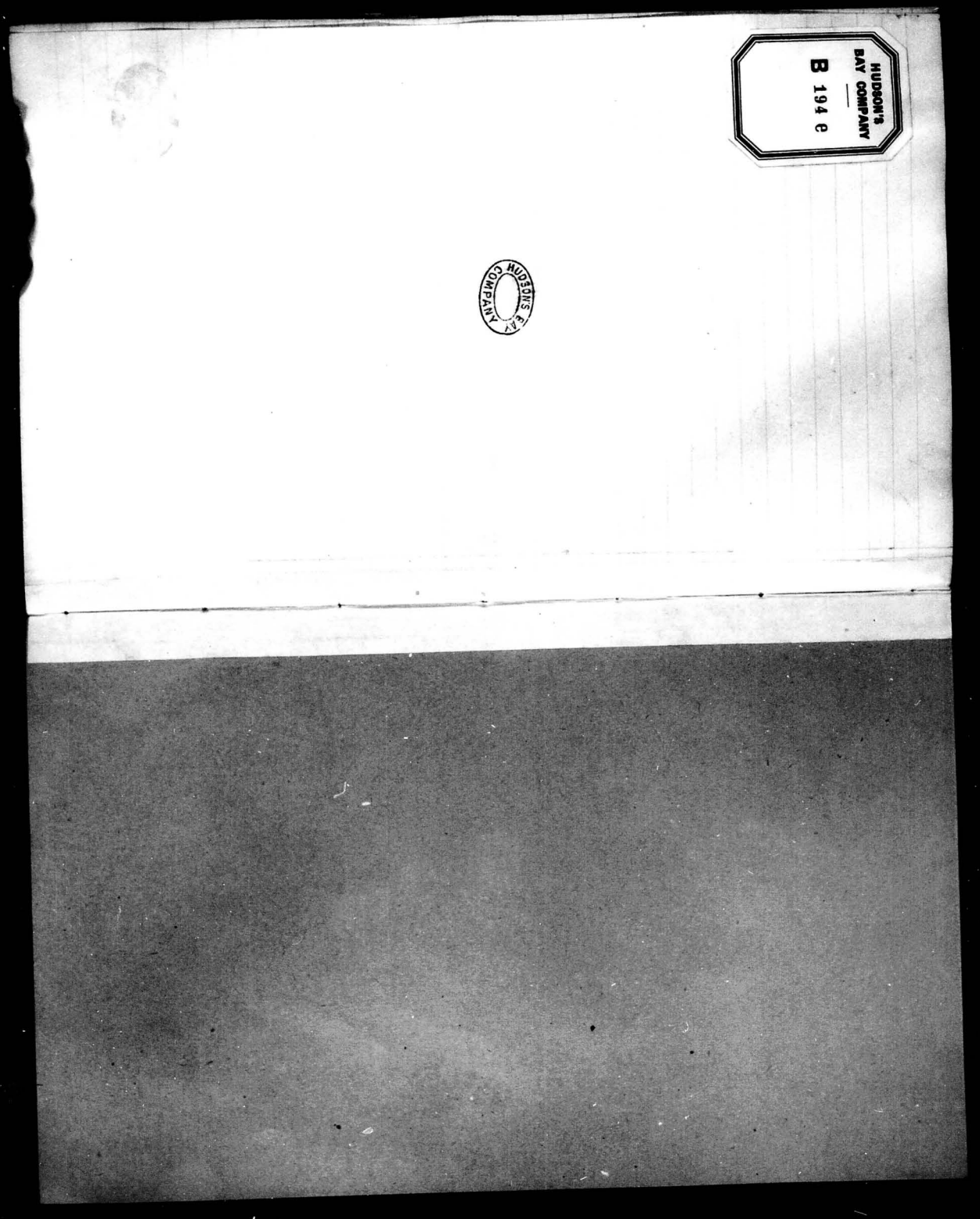

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THE END.

END of SECTION B

CLASS 194

SUBDIVISION e

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