

1

4 Addison Gardens  
Kensington 26<sup>th</sup> April 1885

Dear Sir William

I am ashamed to say  
how long I have kept your  
very welcome letter of the 17<sup>th</sup>  
February unanswered, as I  
have really no good excuse  
for my slowness - I fancy it  
arose chiefly from my not  
having anything to tell you  
worthy of notice - Our  
constant and onerous  
duties during the meeting  
of the British Association must  
have left a great mass of  
work incomplete, and it is  
hard to make up "lee way."

With regard to my friend  
Dr. Bell, I know not what to  
think,

think - There are so many strange things in his letter in the Gazette of the 20<sup>th</sup> March, that I can arrive at only one of two conclusions - He must either be a little mad, or else he does not quite know how to tell the truth -

I have sent an answer, which I trust the Editor will insert -

It is unfortunately very long -

I have a letter from Horn Factory confirming every word I said about the river there -

The Captain of the ship having in his boat, examined and sounded the depth of water in the whole locality -

The promoters of the Hudsons Bay route are quite right in saying that last season was an

exceptionally bad one for ice -  
 so also was 1883. but I believe  
 that every year, during the three  
 or four months that the H. B.

straits are navigable, there  
 will be a certain amount of  
 ice of obstruction, quite sufficient  
 to make the passage by that  
 route, more dangerous and longer  
 as to time, than that by the lakes  
 and St. Lawrence - The ice of the  
 great Fox Channel 35,000 square  
 miles in extent, sends all its ice  
 either at our time or in detach-  
 ments down into the western  
 end of the strait every year.

When it comes as a "lump" it  
 makes a block, when it comes  
~~piecemeal~~<sup>piecemeal</sup>, it may not form  
 a barrier, but may be the source  
 of detention to iron vessels

deeply laden - I am in favor  
of the route if <sup>it</sup> could be  
practically carried out, i.e.,  
carry the wheat from the  
North West, even at a few  
cents less expense, than by  
the Canada Pacific, for it would  
be worth the latter charging  
high freights -

Even Gordon's report is  
very meagre, He gives no where  
extracts from the people's ~~left~~  
journals, left in charge of the  
stations in the street - One of  
these did leak out however  
and showed a very bad state  
of affairs - This will be a test  
season, as we are told that the  
Exploving ship is to be sent forth  
in May - If the vessel is to be

Sir George Naives With the 5  
"Alert," unless she has had  
her Steam Power increased,  
she will not "bump" through the  
ice in so lively a manner as the  
old "Nautilus" did - and will  
give a better idea of what the  
ice obstruction will be to a  
large laden vessel -

They are very busy at South  
Kensington at present, getting  
ready the Mechanical Invention  
Exhibition which is to be opened  
by the Prince of Wales on the 4<sup>th</sup> May.  
It is expected to be a success  
but this will depend, as the  
Healthier's did, on the state of  
the weather - Few summers  
in England are like that of  
last year for fineness -

This season so far promises  
well, never was there a finer

Show of blossom on the  
front trees, an important  
thing to the farmer in these  
hard times -

Your winter seems to have  
been as severe as ours was  
mild, but we had some  
strong storms, and a great  
deal of east winds lately,  
which have been causing many  
deadly cases of lung or bronchial  
disease - We have been all  
fairly well, except that the winds  
have kept Miss Thompson a good  
deal in the house - Both she  
and my wife join me in kindest  
regards to you, and send their  
love to Lady and Miss Dawson

Believe me

very sincerely yours

John Rae

P.S. Would you kindly thank your  
son Dr. George M. Dawson for his pamphlet  
on the superficial deposits and  
glaciation of the Bow and Belly Rivers  
District, which I have read with  
much interest -

J.R.

Sir J. W. Dawson F. R. S  
McGill College  
Montreal

J. A. Aves  
May 1888