

4 Addison Gardens
Kensington 18th Decr. 1884

Dear Sir William

I was about to write to you the other day, when I received from Canada a Copy of the Report of the select committee of your House of Commons on the Geological Surveys of the Dominion, in looking over which I found that my name was mentioned in not a very flattering manner by Dr. Robert Bell - He not only stooped to use personalities, but also resorted to falsehood that he might do so, as I presume, he thought more effectively -

In the first place he added 15 Years to my true age, so as to make his statement, that I was a very old

and foolishly jealous man,
 who could not bear anything being
 said, about the Arctic in general
 and Hudson's Bay in particular,
 by any one else!! I have ^{had} a good
 laugh over this, but it may be
 worth explaining -

Dr. Bell in his reports and
 in papers read by him at the
 British Association at York and
 elsewhere, made statements the
 reverse of correct regarding places
 about which I and others in
 the Hudson's Bay Co., held and had
 expressed very different opinions,
 acquired by long knowledge of
 the localities - I took upon myself
 to contradict Dr. Bell's views and
 hence his ire -

He again assumes falsely
 that I had ^{formed in} formed a plot or
 conspiracy with Dr. Selwyn, a

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perfect stranger to me) to injure
him, whereas the truth is, that
when I received Dr. Selwyn's first
letter, I thought he was displeased
with my having questioned the
correctness of the worth of one of his
"facts", being ignorant of any disagree-
ment among the Geological Staff -

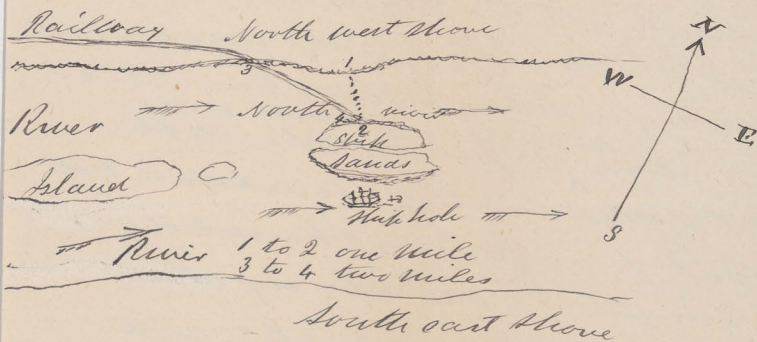
Although I was as sure that Dr. Bell's
map of the Moose River was wrong in the
manner I pointed out, as that I am at this
writing this letter - Yet as the evidence
he pointed up looked formidable (one
of his witnesses was so short sighted that
he could not see 20 Yds or so beyond his
nose and another altho resident at
Moose for several years, had never
been down ^{the river on the north side} as far as opposite the
third falls) and therefore could not
speak from personal knowledge,

I thought it right to bring clear
proof that I was right, and
easily succeeded, in having the evidence
of the gentleman in charge (Mr Cotter)

at Moose who went to see the river,
and saw it. Captain Bishop also, of
the Hudson's Bay Cos ship to Moose, had
made 10 or 11 voyages to that place, and
was at least 100 days in sight of the
river which Dr. Bell divided up, and ran
a railway over.

Dr. Bell also said I could
not be believed because in our letter
I called the river 1 mile wide and in
another 2 miles - This is not quite
correct on ~~the~~ Dr. Bell's part -

In my second letter I said that ~~Dr~~ Bell
made the railway pass over 2 miles
of river, or words to that effect, which
the sketch below will show.



This does not profess to be
drawn to scale -

Dr. Bell says that certain cereals
and vegetables, ^{always} ripen well at Moose
in the open air - The Gentleman
now in charge says that in the last
five years, barley the handsomest amount
of grain, rye perhaps excepted, has
not ripened in three seasons of
these, and that Cucumbers
always require the aid of hot-
beds and glass to bring them to
maturity - one of my correspondents
informed me that it was no use
writing to or telling Dr. Bell this, because
he would say it was bad farming
or that the Hudson's Co's people were
influenced and either withheld
facts or misrepresented them!

Now in my time at Moose it was
as it is now, and two other Gentlemen
who were at different times in charge
(Messrs Macdunn and Miles) were fond
of and understood both gardening
and farming, yet we had as
many seasons of ~~ripe~~ ~~ripe~~ ~~ripe~~ as of

~~Har~~ripe grain, and leeches, frames
and glass were wanted for the
cucumbers -

The temperature of the Bay was
taken in a most unfair manner
by Dr. Bell from a boat close along
the shore of the east main coast,
given a far too high an average,
which he compared with the waters
of Lake Superior, showing that the
latter were colder, and that consequently
the climate of this bay must be better
than that of the great inland Lake

Another person named Dickson (an
honest observer) took a number of
temperatures between Moose and the
east main coast whilst crossing in
a schooner - The extremes were
 29° and 42° - being at least 10° or
 12° lower than Dr. Bell's, *

Dickson's several times were taken
in August 1866 -

a week or two ago I found in

* Dickson remarks the nearer the shore
the higher the temperature -

the volume of transactions of
 your Young Royal Society of Canada
 a paper on Ornithology of Hudson's Bay
 and some of the Territory ^{by Dr. Bell,} read
 sometime in 1882? I am no Ornitho-
 logist, but have enough knowledge
 to state that it contains a good many
 not unimportant errors, one of which
^{only} I shall ~~only~~ mention - He makes out
 the Blue winged goose (which happens
 when mature to have its head and
 part of its neck white) to be merely the
 young or immature ~~of~~ of the white
 neck or Snow goose - Never was there
 a greater mistake -

Of all places in Hudson's Bay, the
 marshes near Moose are the best
 possible to study these two species, as
 they are in about equal numbers
 and very abundant in these marshes,
 both in Spring and Autumn when
 migrating - In Spring there are
 only two distinct species, or varieties
 In the autumn on their return

from breeding, there are four
well marked varieties - The Snow
Goose with her young of a light
grey colour, and the blue winged
goose with her brood, of a dark
blue, approaching to black on the
head - How would Dr. Bell reconcile
this with his hobnag and views.

It perhaps you may have heard I
was and am still a keen sportsman
and all my leisure time during
10 years at Moose was spent in the
autumn among the geese and
ducks, so I had ample time to
watch these beautiful creatures
and study the affection of the
mother to her ignorant offspring
which would persist in being called
away by the hunter to their destruction
in spite of all the mother's efforts
to coax them to fly in another
direction, she herself falling
a victim generally to her maternal
affection - To any one well
acquainted

acquainted with the Ornithology
of America, I am sure the reading
over Dr. Bell's paper would be
an interesting and amusing study.
I was only able to judge of the
larger kinds of birds, possibly an
equal number of mustates
may be found the smaller
Species -

Having already written more
than enough, it is high time to
close this very long letter -

With our united kind regards
to yourself, Lady and Miss Dawson
and the best wishes of the
Season. believe me

Dear Sir William
very truly yours
John Rae

Sir William J. Dawson K.C.M.G. F.R.S.R
McGill College
Montreal

J. Rae

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