Article 1 of the Paris Award regulations, that is to say, capturing seals within the 60-mile zone. The captain admitted the offence, but pleaded extenuating circumstances. The vessel was brought to trial in the Vice Admiralty Court of British Columbia on the 28th November, the Chief Justice presiding.

The evidence offered was to the effect that the vessel was found about 10 miles inside the prohibited zone, with her canoes out, engaged in sealing. The day was clear and the master endeavoured to explain the presence of his vessel within the zone by stating that he was unable the day before to take observations, owing to thick weather, and also on account of his being misled by a chart, showing the currents. He further stated that on the 8th September he believed his vessel was eight miles outside the zone, by dead reckoning, and on the 9th that he was 4½ miles outside, and that while he was under the impression that he was getting further from the line, the current was having the opposite effect, and he had taken no observations before the boats went out in the morning.

Although the suit was entered for confiscation, a fine only was pressed for.

The text of the judgment is as follows :—

"The mere fact, which is admitted, that the ship was engaged in sealing in prohibited waters constitutes an offence under the Act. The ship "Minnie," 23 S. C. at p. 484. Mr. Pooley stated that he could only ask for a fine. Captain Finnis, the seizing office, having attributed carelessness to the master. Where the owner of a ship employs a competent master and furnishes him with proper instruments, and the master uses due diligence, but for some unforeseen cause, against which no precaution reasonably necessary to be taken can guard, is found sealing where sealing is forbidden, the Court would be well exercised by the imposition of a nominal fine only.

"But in this case the master, for eight days immediately preceding the day of seizure, was knowingly sealing in the close vicinity of the prohibited zone, and while I am desirous of making every allowance for him because of his having been misled as to the current by the chart upon which he relied, and in the difficulties owing to bad weather, and to his men not being well under control, I cannot acquit him of great carelessness in not taking a sight on that day before allowing his men to leave the ship.

"Having regard to the limit of £500, I think the justice of the case will be met by the infliction of a fine of £200, upon payment of which, within one month, the ship, equipage and cargo will be released."

The fine was paid by the owners.

DISASTER.

The sealing schooner "Pioneer," of Victoria, B.C., is reported missing, her last port of call being Ounalaska, and no doubt now exists as to her loss.

The "Pioneer" was a vessel of 73 tons, and carried a crew of six white men and 20 Indians from the west coast of Vancouver Island. On leaving Ounalaska she had on board 453 seal skins, taken in Behring Sea.

This is the only disaster or loss of life among the fleet reported this season.

DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS.

The report for 1897 contains considerable reference to diplomatic negotiations and expert investigation into seal life, embracing the text of the findings of the fur-seal experts who held a conference in Washington during that year, looking to possible revision of the Paris Regulations.

The principal correspondence between the Premier of Canada and the United States negotiator, Mr. Foster, leading up to a basis for an International Joint High Commission, for the adjustment of questions pending between Canada and the United States, was also published.

The Minister of Marine and Fisheries having, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government agreed in May last at Washington to a protocol for a reference to such Joint High Commission of outstanding differences between Canada and the United States, the Behring Sea seal question was referred to that tribunal by such protocol as follows :—