

unconsumable stores. I do not know whether that means stores that could not be consumed or stores that had not been consumed; I apprehend it meant stores that could not be consumed, and we were to get all that. Our Government agreed to accept this valuable acquisition upon these liberal terms, and a communication was sent to the Government stating:

"The ship will be delivered to you all standing as she came from the sea, and you may probably find in her a quantity of coal, salt meat and other provisions."

This was addressed by our Minister of Marine to Capt. Scott of "our service." Now, Sir, that was very satisfactory so far; but, unfortunately, when Capt. Scott made the investigation, it was found there was no salt meat, no provision and no coal. So anxious were our friends on the other side to acquire this property and become possessed of a vessel of war, that they were willing to take the property without the usual preliminary investigation as to whether the vessel was fit for the service for which she was intended. I suppose, acting upon the principle that you should never look a gift horse in the mouth, our Minister of Marine at once jumped at the conclusion that this was an exceedingly favorable offer, and he, on the 22nd November, 1880, directs our Ambassador to thank the Imperial Government for this valuable gift. Why, Sir, a valuable gift; they knew nothing about it at the time, had never inspected her, had never seen her, and knew nothing about her fitness for the service for which she was intended; they had no idea whether she was properly equipped or not. Yet they appear to have been delighted, in ecstasies, intoxicated with joy at the very idea of the acquisition of this valuable man-of-war. Sir, it looked to me very much as if they were about as well pleased and tickled with the gift as the King of Siam is, as you know, Mr. Speaker, when he becomes the fortunate donee of a white elephant. You know he rejoices with exceeding great joy. The whole court becomes intoxicated with gladness. The moment the presentation is made, the dancing girls are brought in and the tom-toms are set to work to discourse music to the assembled multitude. So with our friends on the other side; they appear to have been so delighted, so full of ecstasy, so enchanted with this acquisition, that they thought it was not worth while, or proper, or prudent, to make any enquiries as to the condition of the vessel. But permit me to remind you that the King of Siam, when he acquires the valuable gift of a white elephant does one thing that I am going to recommend the gentlemen opposite to do in this case. You know, Sir, being thoroughly conversant with the history of that noted country, and its forms and ceremonies, that when the king becomes possessed of this white elephant he at once erects a pavillion for the animal, and then he sends out all over the country; and, if possible, secures a white monkey. The white monkey is put in the pavillion for the purpose of keeping off evil spirits. I say here to our Canadian High Admiral, get a white monkey and send him down to the harbor of St. John to prevent the *Charybdis* from dying of dry rot. Now, after having done all this, after having this property partially transferred to them, our hon. friends on the other side, especially the hon. the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, through his representative on the other side of the water, does what he ought to have done at the outset, he makes enquiries as to the character of the vessel; he goes on board and inspects her, and what is the result of that investigation? Now, I ask the hon. the Minister of War sitting opposite me, to take up this interesting correspondence that, perhaps, in the multiplicity of the business that engages his attention from morning till night, he has had no opportunity to examine. I ask him to take up the report of the correspondence in the Sessional Papers of 1881, and see exactly the character of this valuable acquisition with which the Cana-

dian Government and people are saddled—not, I hope, for all time to come. In going over that correspondence I find this state of facts existing with respect to that vessel. This vessel of war, recollect, that was going to be a terror to the Queen's enemies, and of dread, I fear to the Queen's subjects, this magnificent vessel of war that was going to astonish the Canadian natives, let us hear the description given of it in the correspondence to which I briefly alluded. First, she is described as an old type of corvette. Seamen will know what that means. She was said to have been seven and a-half years in the Chinese seas, not much improved, one would naturally imagine, by that service. She was twenty years old, far past the bloom of maidenhood, and was verging upon the sear and yellow leaf. She was of a type, say the Lords of the Admiralty, that was not worth the cost of repairing, so that it was necessary to dry dock her, as the boilers would not last two years. It turned out that the boilers would not last two days, that she was utterly unfit for any service when the inspection was made, that she had no provisions nor coal on board, and that it was necessary to buy a heavy anchor for safety in the harbor of St. John, where they were taking her to. I do not know whether they got the heavy anchor—I believe they did from the accounts submitted to the House. I am told that the heavy anchor did not save the people of St. John from this terrible monster; that her speed under steam at high pressure was seven knots per hour; that it required 180 men to work her. When testing the boilers it was discovered that they were in a very unsatisfactory condition, in fact that they were very old and useless. And on the 2nd of December, 1880, it was stated that the estimated cost of the repairs of the vessel amounted to £2,000 sterling. That was the kind of vessel we got, and that is the information I got here from the papers submitted last year. Having made this inspection, and having made some improvements, they spent nearly, if not altogether, £2,000 upon this vessel, when another difficulty arose. It became a question among the high authorities sent to England whether the vessel could cross the ocean at all or not. It was quite clear, from the report we have heard, that it would not be safe for her to undertake a sea voyage in the winter. Whether she should take the southerly or northerly route was not certain; a council of war was held, and the conclusion arrived at was that at one season of the year was the voyage safe, and the captain decided that he should leave for the other side of the Atlantic in April, and then take a northerly course; and then it was said that it might be possible to accomplish the voyage in forty days. Even after the inspection was made by himself, and after a council of war was held, Capt. Scott decided that the vessel was not quite satisfactory. His life was not insured, nor could he get seamen whose lives were insured, he did not feel safe in launching his precious body on board of this valuable corvette even in April, and with the wisdom which characterized him—and which, I suppose, generally characterizes seamen—he concluded that he would have a further inspection. He calls in an expert, Mr. Barber, who reports to him on the 5th January, 1881. The substance of his report appears in the following letter:—"Mr. Barber, as you will see, has made a report condemning the boiler. He says that in bad weather we might be caught in a lee shore, and then to have poor boilers would cost us our lives. "Such arguments," says Capt. Scott, "are unanswerable;" and I should say they were. With bad boilers, with only a pressure of ten pounds on the safety valve, with a tub of a vessel that was twenty years old, seven years of which were spent in the Chinese seas, a vessel that was not well equipped, I agree with Capt. Scott that the "arguments were unanswerable"—and the captain acted on the belief that the arguments were unanswerable. What does he do further? He goes again with Mr. Barber on the vessel,