

for the purpose of reaching fifteen thousand people in British Columbia: is that a reason for spending \$21,000,000 to reach for three days of the year one hundred thousand people? I do not care if there was extravagant expenditure, that is, as a reason for present injudicious expenditure. I do not wish to discuss this subject at any great length, but I can assure my hon. friend that the Government are determined that there shall be as good a service across the Straits of Northumberland as it is possible for them to establish within any reasonable bounds of expenditure. If the "Stanley," which at considerable cost they have built expressly for the route, does not continue to perform the service efficiently, as it has done in the past, we shall have to consider what next we are to do; because we are bound to give a service as good as can possibly be furnished for the amount we are justified in expending there. We are anxious to give that, and we require no pressure whatever to induce us to give it. We think we have done it now; we think we have furnished a crossing which is satisfactory, as far as satisfaction can be attained. It is possible and probable that for the purpose of the transit of freight, if this style of vessel answers the purpose, other vessels may be put on, and possibly, if circumstances demand it, assistance may be given them. Or we may adopt another route. I am told that there is a route to the westward of the Island, where there is very little ice, and where for a comparatively small expenditure vessels could carry trains across at all seasons. These are subjects which will come up if necessary hereafter, and will receive due consideration when they do come up; but at this moment I think we are in the position of having commenced a new experiment, which so far has operated well, and promises well; and I think it is premature to set about something else before we have found out that this is a failure. I sympathize with my hon. friend's desire to have all the information possible on the subject, and as the Government really did make all the necessary enquiries and investigations when this matter came up before it on a former occasion, such information is in the archives of the Department. There are a great many valuable statistics there as to the work required for a subway or tunnel, which ever it is—although

they are two very different things—and to the cost of it—as to the possibility maintaining the subway which, as I understand it, is to lie on the bottom of the sea, and which is to be exposed to the floating ice passing backward and forward all winter; or a tunnel below the surface, which would be free altogether from that difficulty, but which would be more costly than the metal subway that my hon. friend proposes. I have no doubt that we have all the information which would enable the House to judge of the propriety of the expenditure necessary for a subway, and it can be got without the necessity of issuing an expensive commission, and spending twenty or thirty thousand dollars in doing what we have practically done. We have accurate surveys of the two routes across the Straits of Northumberland, and measurements of almost every yard in the whole distance. We know the character of the adjacent banks exactly, the nature of the currents and tides; all these matters have been made subjects of examination, and we have the information in the Departments; and if my hon. friend asks for it I shall facilitate in every possible way his efforts to get the information necessary to enable the House to form an accurate idea of the cost of building such a subway. Of course, in the event of the means which the Government has provided for transit being found insufficient, further information will be procured. I would suggest my hon. friend to convert his motion into an address asking for such information as he wants—though I think he knows as much about it as any engineer does—but all events for the information of the House, and bring it forward in an official way. If he will do that I will facilitate in every possible way his getting all he desires, but I do not think he ought to press this motion, or the motion in amendment. I did not propose to take any exception to the form which the motion took. The second is not so objectionable; but although it does not state the imputation upon the Government directly, it implies that the Government have not done their duty, otherwise a commission would not be required. Let us wait until we have a severe season, and then if this vessel is not equal to the demand upon it, I think it will be time enough to call upon the Government to take some other mode of improving the