

HON. MR. HAYTHORNE—I think it cost about £3,000,000 sterling. I have endeavored to shorten my statement as much as possible, partly because I have a very bad cold, and partly because this House is getting wearied. The length of that tunnel is 7,000 yards, against some 11,000 or 12,000 yards across the Straits of Northumberland. I do not want to throw difficulties in the way of my hon. colleague; I would rather help him, but I do not think I could help him in the way I wish to do if I did not give full expression to the difficulties which such undertakings are always subject to. I know myself that springs are quite common, particularly on the shores of the Island. I know from experience, on the Cape Tormentine side, you may see them at the railway stations. In the corner of one of the waiting rooms is a living spring which empties into a barrel, and there is a little hotel near the railway station where I have taken my meals, and there I found another spring boiling up in the same way, and it is a matter of probability that considerable difficulty may be found in this work from springs. I think the hon. gentleman has taken a fair and wise course. If the Government can find engineers accustomed to hydraulic work, and willing to undertake a survey, and report on this scheme, it would be a reasonable guide to us as to whether the thing was within the bounds of practicability or not. If it should prove to be so, we could then fairly press the Government to go on with this tunnel, providing other means should fail altogether. But I have to point out, before I leave this subject, that up to the present day no attempt has yet been made to navigate the Straits by steamship. The "Northern Light" made one or two attempts to navigate the Straits in winter, but hers was a course through the worst part of the Straits, and besides she was entirely unfitted for such work. She drew too much water, and could not get within easy distance of shore, so that I do not attach much importance to that experiment. I do not suppose the "Stanley" is very well adapted for such service either. She is very well adapted for the purpose she was intended. We have before us the fact that a stretch of fresh water a few hundred miles from us has been navigated successfully in the winter by a steamship. I have been unable to ascertain full information of the

daily running of the "St. Ignace" in the Straits of Mackinaw, but I have here a statement which appeared in one of the illustrated newspapers at the time that vessel was about to commence the undertaking. I may say that I have crossed the Straits of Northumberland a great many times myself, and I have seen those Straits under almost every possible phase of their winter appearance. I have seen them when they were nearly clear of ice. I have seen them when they were covered with lolly from one side to the other; and I have seen them when the pan ice was so glare and smooth that all the men had to do was to run along with the boat almost without effort. I have seen it also when the ice was so thin that it actually bent under the weight of the boat and passengers as they were hauled along for miles together. With that experience I think I am entitled to offer an opinion as to the possibility of a steamer crossing those Straits in the winter, and I believe honestly and fairly that a steamship designed and built expressly for that purpose, and no other, would keep communication open all winter. I dare say the time will come when the increase of trade between the island and the mainland will be so great that public opinion will call for something more convenient, something which will cause less exposure to the weather than a winter passage over the ice—quite possibly within the next decade or so, and a demand may spring up for a tunnel, or a sub-way as the hon. gentleman pleases to call it. But if the report of the commissioners were in the hands of the Government to-day I think there would necessarily be a long interval during which the building of that tunnel would be proceeding. It would take perhaps as long to finish it as to build the Severn tunnel. It would perhaps meet with difficulties and obstacles as great, or very similar to what were met with in the case of the Severn tunnel, and therefore during all that period the island would be fairly entitled to have its produce and passengers and mails carried backwards and forwards in some way more convenient than by means of the small ice boats when the hard ice forms off the island and prevents vessels from performing the service there. I do not intend to put forward my own ideas very forcibly on this question. I will take the opinions of a gentleman who was examined before