

some conclusion, respecting the possibility of keeping up steam communication at the capes.

The steamer entered upon the work of observation about the 12th of December, 1896, and remained until the 4th May, 1897, considerable data having been obtained for future consideration. The experiment, however, was not on the whole a success. In the early part of the season a heavy storm came on and icebound the "Petrel" for over a mile. Continuous and determined efforts were made by the captain and crew, to cut the steamer out beyond the coast or board ice, to enable her to make the crossing through the moving or floating ice. These efforts were, however, not successful. The ice was found to be about two feet in thickness, and although every possible expedient was resorted to, it was not found possible to release the steamer from her ice-bound condition until towards the spring.

That is the whole story as told by the Minister of Marine and Fisheries in his report. He says very innocently that the "Petrel" was allowed to remain in the ice until navigation opened. He tells us in another place that she was caught by the ice and she could not be got out. As a fact she lay there almost the whole winter with a crew of officers, engineers and men on board her, and she never made a crossing from the early part of January until the very latter end of April when the navigation opened anyway. Then she made some trips, for which credit is taken. As I have already remarked, it is evident to any one who has given the matter the slightest consideration that this boat would do just what she did do, and that was nothing. It was perfectly impossible that she could do anything, a small paltry boat such as she is. As reported by the minister himself, she was not specially built to encounter ice. It was well known to any one who gave the matter consideration that she could not accomplish anything and they were not disappointed. I have somewhat of a complaint to make against the Minister of Marine and Fisheries in connection with this matter, because I find that in former debates in the House of Commons, before he became a minister, he spoke very adversely of this route altogether. He denounced the late government for expenditures which they had made in connection with it. He declared that there was no natural harbour there, and that the government were blamable for having erected wharfs at that place and having aided in the construction of a railway from Sackville to Cape Traverse, which he declared was no use to anybody, as this was not a practicable route. In view of these facts, and the kind of boat that was employed to make the ex-

periment last winter, there are not a few people down there who believe that it was the desire of the minister to condemn the route by placing upon it a boat which every one must have known could do no good. At all events that has been the result of the so-called experiment. Then the hon. minister speaks in his report, of the useful information that was being obtained, for instance, in ascertaining the thickness of the ice, the prevailing currents, and all that. I can tell the hon. gentleman that every fine day in the winter boats cross from side to side, and an officer of the department could cross with those boats and test the thickness of the ice just as well as he could by sitting there in the steamer comfortably enjoying himself all the winter at the expense of the country, and if he desired to obtain an idea as to the force of the current, I know that information could be just as well obtained by an officer of the department taking passage day after day across the straits with one of those ice boats as by this expensive means of getting a tug boat to lie at the wharf on one side of the straits and keeping it there at the expense of the tax-bearers of the country of about \$14,000 for the winter. Last year I put a notice on the order paper and asked for some information as to what this steamer had done, and the charter party and the correspondence which led to her being engaged for the service, was brought down. I have these papers in my hand. The pay roll is also among them, showing the salaries that were paid to the officials and others employed to man that boat during the winter. I will just read some of the items from the pay roll. The captain employed was Jos. Macdonald. He is a good navigator, no doubt, but he had never had any experience with ice boats. If it was really desired to get any information, one would have thought that the government would have employed some of the experienced men who had been on the steamer "Stanley." However, Capt. Joseph Macdonald was employed at a salary of \$70 per month; the mate received \$50 a month and two engineers \$60 a month each. There was the stewardess at \$30 per month, and seven seamen at from twenty to twenty-five dollars a month. This statement which was brought down shows that up to the 30th April the sum of \$10,980.82 was expended. The Auditor General's report and that of the Department of Marine and Fisheries shows