

HON. MR. ABBOTT—Yes.

HON. MR. HOWLAN—The hon. gentleman is mistaken.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—Those are the figures given to me. I have nothing to do with that offer now, except as an indication of what my hon. friend thought this tunnel would cost. Now, this proposition was considered by the Government to some extent, a report was made on it in one of the Departments, and, probably, an answer given to my hon. friend—at all events, it was not accepted. In 1887 my hon. friend called the attention of the House to this subject and requested that the attention of the Government might be directed to it, and it was. He made on that occasion an able and elaborate statement of the facts. There is no doubt there was at that time considerable cause of complaint as to the nature of the crossing which had been provided between the main shore and Prince Edward Island. My hon. friend was then told on behalf of the Government that the matter was under consideration, and that steps would be taken to improve the communication. The Government carried out that promise. The Government satisfied themselves that the project of making a tunnel across the Straits of Northumberland or a subway—two very different things, by the way—was really in one sense impracticable—that is to say, it would cost so much as not to justify the expenditure of the sum required for the service which it was intended to perform. Of course, we know nothing is impracticable to engineers: they can do anything, if there is only enough money to do it with, and the question which the Government should consider, and I hope it will be held, notwithstanding my hon. friend's strictures, the question the Government invariably does consider, follows under all circumstances, is the proportion which the cost of the service will bear to the advantage it confers on a section or on all of our fellow citizens. And the Government came to the conclusion that the amount which that tunnel or subway would cost was greatly in excess of the proportion it should bear to the advantages which would be gained by the amelioration of the transport service. It is possible that hon. gentlemen may not have a clear idea of the cost of these tunnels. Now, I have just taken the trouble this

afternoon to glance at the subject, and I find that the cost per mile of the Arlberg tunnel was \$950,400 per mile; of the St. Gothard, \$1,258,400 per mile; of the Mont Cenis, \$1,988,800 per mile. These are on land, not under water. The Thames tunnel, which is under water, cost \$11,440,000 per mile. The Severn tunnel, which is the most recent of those tunnels, and which is a very much admired work, though it, like every other tunnel, was subject to constant difficulties—every tunnel that I know of has been subject to unexpected difficulties—cost, if I am right in calculating the length at $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles, \$3,333,333 a mile. At that rate, which I think we might fairly take as, apart from mere engineering estimates, a reasonably probable measure of the cost—because engineers cannot take account of the difficulties that may be found in the bottom of the ocean—this tunnel, if we take one of the routes which connects the two railways, and which is eight miles long, would cost \$26,000,000. The shortest route, which would require to be connected by railway (but that, of course, when we talk of the cost of the tunnel, is a small affair (would cost \$20,000,000, to make it six miles long. These figures are appalling. It must be remembered that if this tunnel is six miles and a-half miles long it will cost \$21,500,000, and this would give a sum equal to \$210 per head for every man, woman and child in the Province. Remembering that fact, let us see how the transport across the Straits stands at present. As I say, the Government made up their minds that this project of constructing a tunnel or subway was too expensive to be contemplated: it was not justified by the benefit it was calculated to yield to the people. Hon. gentlemen are aware that the "Northern Light" was an experiment, and nothing more. We were aware that it did not perform the service in the manner in which we desired it should be done, and we sent a person across the Atlantic to the northern European countries, to find out the best mode of construction for a steamer that would perform the service across the Straits of Northumberland, which we desired to render to Prince Edward Island. We got the best plan which it was practicable to get, and built the "Stanley" according to that plan. The "Stanley" is constructed of steel, and has been built within the last year and