

ice, and which got into Hudson Bay during the month of June. He also referred to a report made by Capt. Markham, who appears to have gone in the "Alert," the Canadian Government steamship, as an agent of the promoters of the Hudson Bay Railway Company. We all know that the evidence of a gentleman of that sort is always to be taken with a certain allowance. Without at all saying that Capt. Markham would state what he did not believe to be true, it is always expected that a gentleman who goes out with a strong desire to find a certain thing will generally find that thing. He does not take the impartial view of what he observes that a person should take in a case of this kind. Capt. Markham went to Hudson Bay anxious to find out, if he could, that the route was navigable, so that the company which he represented would be able to place its bonds advantageously in the money markets of the world. Lieut. Parry, afterwards Sir Edward Parry, said that Hudson Straits were open for navigation not earlier than the first week of July. I think that that is probably correct. It is rather singular that the hon. gentleman in submitting to us evidence to show the character of the navigation of Hudson Strait did not submit the report made by the Government officers who were sent out for the express purpose of making enquiry into the subject. The result of these expeditions was felt to be in the negative. The "Neptune" went one year, and the "Alert" I think two years, into Hudson Bay. There were observing stations established at different points, from Port Burwell, at the east end of Hudson Straits, to Churchill; and apparently the net result of all the observations was that this Hudson Bay route was not regarded as a practicable commercial route. The hon. gentleman said that we should remember that the authorities which he cited dealt with sailing vessels, and that steamers could do very much better than sailing vessels. No doubt they can; but we have the experience of the steamer which the Government sent in there. On two occasions, during two voyages, the steamer broke her propeller. On the first voyage of the "Alert"—

HON. MR. BOULTON—It was in consequence of being an auxiliary steamer that the propeller was broken. It was only an

auxiliary screw steamer—that is, they pull the screw up and down. The full capacity of the steamer was only 6 knots an hour, in consequence of it having an auxiliary screw; and I believe the accident happened in the pulling of it up and down.

HON. MR. POWER—There was no statement to that effect in the report. The hon. gentleman may have ascertained that the accident happened that way from talking with the commander of the vessel. In reading the report I did not see it so stated. It was said that the propeller was broken in the ice, and the steamer was at the time trying to push her way through the ice; so I presume the propeller must have been in the water and that the hon. gentleman is wrong. In the Spring of 1885, when the "Alert" got to the mouth of Hudson Strait, she found things just as I have stated—that the ice brought down by the Davis Strait current meeting with the ice coming out of Hudson Strait caused such an obstruction that she was not able to get in; and the steamer backed and filled for some weeks off the mouth of the strait, and ultimately, after sustaining damage from ice, was obliged to go to St. John's, Nfld., for repairs.

HON. MR. KAULBACH—When was this?

HON. MR. POWER—In the month of June. This was a steamer that was not constructed for Arctic service, but was a sealer, and constructed with a view of dealing with ice.

HON. MR. HOWLAN—The "Alert" was an Arctic steamer. The "Neptune" was a sealing steamer.

HON. MR. POWER—I do not propose to deal with this question of the navigation of Hudson Strait any further, except to say that I think enough has been shown to cause very great doubt as to the practicability of that route for commercial purposes. No doubt, strongly-built vessels can get in and out probably without any reasonable risk, for two months in the year; but beyond that there is no certainty of their getting in and out; and if a vessel cannot get out later than the middle of September, then she is of no use for carrying out that season's crop. That fact must be borne in mind.