COLONIAL LEGISLATURE

House of Assembly, Tuesday, April 5th, 1853

DUTY ON THE SALE OF WRECKED VESSELS AND UNCLAIMED UNCLAIMED GOODS

House in Committee of Supply.—Hon. Mr. Jardine, in the Chair.

Mr. Montgomery. I wish to know whether the Government are aware, that, at the North Cape, in the fall of 1841, there was a sale of wrecked and unclaimed goods, to the amount of about £250; the proceeds of which, after deducting expenses, ought to have been paid into the Treasury; but that, according to common report, no balance whatever has been so paid in on account of those goods. The same fall, there was also a sale of a wrecked vessel, the *Britannia;* and, with respect to that sale, it is also currently reported, that the amount due to the Government is still retained by the broker, Fitzgibbons. Last fall, it is also said, there was another sale of another wreck; and that the amount of duty, £18 9s., due to the Government, is still in the hands of the broker. I have been credibly informed, that the same individual, Fitzgibbons, acted as broker in each of those cases; and that the defaults, so made by him, have been represented to the Government, or, at least, to some members of the Government. It, therefore, wish to know whether these, or any such cases of defalcation, have actually been brought to the knowledge of the Government; and, if so, what action they have taken, or purpose to take, with reference thereto. The reports, as I have stated them, are quite current, in one section of the Island at least; and it is time, not only due to the public, whose interests are involved therein, and also, to the Government, who ought always to be the protectors of those interests, that the truth respecting such alleged defaults, and the steps pursued, or intended to be pursued, by the Government, with reference to them, should be fully ascertained, and made known, for the public satisfaction. The duty, if it really has been paid into the public treasury, was, in one case, £18 9s. In another, it was over £7; and this Fitzgibbons, according to report, had positively refused to pay over into the hands of the Collector of the District or Port.

Hon. Mr. Coles. The proper time for making such an enquiry, and for such a matter to be in Committee of the whole on the Public Accounts. How was the Government, without direct official communications, to become acquainted with every case of wrecked property on the coast?

Mr. Montgomery. Fitzgibbons, I have been informed, made a communication to Mr. Fraser, the Collector of Excise for Charlottetown; and, at the same time, sent him the amount of duty which was due to the Treasury. Mr. Fraser, however, I have been told returned it to Mr. Fitzgibbons, directing him to pay it into the hands of the nearest Collector of Excise.

Hon. Mr. Coles. It was not the duty of the Government, but the duty of the Collector of Excise for the District, to look after wrecks; and, if no reports concerning them were made, to the Government, by him, how were the Government to know any thing about them?

Mr. Montgomery. Fitzgibbons, I understand, occasionally gave an account for the duties to the Collector of the District.

Hon. Mr. Coles. Well, if he did, it was the duty of the Collector to seize the wreck.

Mr. Montgomery. I ask whether Mr. Coles are that dutiable articles, when wrecked, should be collected.

Mr. Coles. I never heard of it before.

Mr. Fraser. It can be proved that the District knew it; and that he the facts of the cases to one or of the Government, after having endeavoured to collect the duties on the goods. No such communication was made. I know nothing of it before. brought to my knowledge, I am have done my utmost to have the investigated.

Mr. Coles. A statement made to a the Government, in the street, is communication to the Government. the Government, no communication, any such defaults as those now com- has ever been made to them. And, gentleman individually, I am certain I never before heard a word about the alleged omission to pay over the duty due to the Government on the sale of a wrecked vessel.

Mr. Montgomery. Mr. Fraser told me, some time ago, that he had consulted with several members of the Government concerning it.

Hon. Mr. Pope. I know nothing about the matter further, than that the tender of a certain sum of money, as the amount of certain duties, due to the Government, was made to me in my Office; and that I declined to receive it, stating that it should be paid into the Treasury through the regular channel. I was not even aware that any duty of the kind was due to the Government.

Mr. Montgomery. Members of the Government had certainly been particularly spoken to concerning both the wrecked vessels—and it was stated to them that the duty had not been paid, in either case, and that, in one case, it had sold last fall, twelve months; nor on that sold this fall.

Hon. Mr. Coles. I did not before understand that two wrecked vessels were alluded to; I thought the duty spoken of was that on the sale of the vessel wrecked this fall.

Mr. Fraser. No official complaint or representation of the kind, that I know, has been made by the Collector of the District; and—as it is said that he was fully aware of the amount of duty which, in each case, ought to have been paid into his hands by the broker, but which, it is asserted, has not been paid—it certainly was his duty, either to take such steps as the law authorizes for the securing of the duty due to the Government, or to make a direct official communication of the facts to the Government. He did not, however, it appears, think proper to adopt either the one or the other of these courses; and, therefore, if the amount of duty which ought to have been paid over to him, for the Government, by the broker, still remains in the hands of the broker, he, the Collector, is certainly the more culpable of the blame-worthy party of the two. In fact, independently of an official representation of defaults of this kind, the Government could know nothing about them; and, with respect to those now referred to, and concerning which some statements, it is admitted, have been made to individuals either belonging to the Government, or connected with the Government, it is clear, that the broker, on offering to pay the duty in Town, either into my hands or those of the Treasurer, was directed to pay it into those of the Collector, and, in consequence, in the Statement subsequently sent in to the Government by that Collector, there was credit given to the Government for the payment of duty, the same in amount as that which the broker had offered to pay in Town. It was natural, in the absence of official complaint on the part of the Collector—to conclude that that was the duty, the payment of which in Town was refused, as irregular, from the broker. It, therefore, clearly appears that if there has been official neglect of duty in the business, it has been altogether on the part of the Collector of the District.

Mr. Montgomery. I understand Fitzgibbons said that the amount of duty due last year, was not to be paid to the Collector of the District, but either directly into the Treasury, or to the Collector of Excise for Charlottetown.

Hon. the Speaker. It is decidedly not the proper time to take up such a question; but an Address, to His Excellency, praying for information, or due enquiry, concerning the alleged defaults, may, if it be moved for in, and agreed to by, the House.

Hon. Mr. Coles. I remember that last fall, twelve months, Mr. Fraser consulted me about the matter in question; and that, then, I looked into the Act, and pointed out to him that the duty was, according to the Act, to be paid into the hands of the nearest Collector of Excise.

Mr. Montgomery. It is said that, eighteen months ago, wrecked and unclaimed goods were sold by Fitzgibbons, as broker, to the amount of £50, and that no account whatever has been given in to the Government or to any Collector's Office.

Hon. Mr. Coles. If the Collector of the District was aware of any such sales, it was his duty to make an official communication thereof to the Government. Whatever fault or omission, in the case, may be fairly attributable to the broker, the Collector cannot be neglect of duty—if the particulars of the defaults have been truly stated—appears to be justly chargeable upon the Collector of the District.

The matter was then allowed to drop.

SATURDAY, March, 19th.

REMUNERATION TO PETIT JURORS.

Hon. Mr. Palmer. I rise to move that the House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the whole, for the sole purpose of taking into consideration the propriety of making an allowance to Petit Jurors for their attendance at the Supreme Court. I have, last Session, before the Council, a *Bill to regulate the mode of Summoning Jurors*; and if this House shall agree to grant pay to Petit Jurors, their provision for that purpose may, very easily, engrafted upon that Bill when it shall be sent down to us from the Council.

No opposition being made to this motion of the hon. and learned gentleman, the House resolved itself into a Committee of the whole accordingly.

Hon. Mr. Palmer. I am not aware that the question of remunerating Petit Jurors has ever before been taken up by the Assembly; but I do know that the propriety of doing so has frequently been agitated out of doors; and, from my own and general experience of the tax imposed upon certain classes of the community, through their being compelled to attend the sittings of the Supreme Court, as Jurors, at seasons of the year when they can ill afford the time, for the purpose, to abandon the labors of their avocation, is frequently attended with very serious inconvenience and loss to them; I am persuaded that the question has been duly considered by the House without good reasons; and that the majority of those who are thus called are, by no means, well able to bear the burden thereby imposed upon them; and, I conclude that it is with a view to this House to provide remuneration for their attendance. I very well know that such remuneration is not universally allowed. It is not, at present, allowed in Great Britain; but it is generally allowed in British Colonies, although in some of them it is made. The old idea, which has, generally, hitherto regulated the practice with respect to the duties of jurors, is, that it should be the being obliged, as jurymen, to assist in the administration of justice, may frequently be the cause of their being unnecessarily detained, and even loss, to individuals so bound to act; yet, as the due enforcement of the laws and the observances of justice, are for the benefit of all, there may be some propriety in their assistance for these purposes, in the capacity of jurors, should be allowed to claim, either exemption from the duty, or remuneration for the performance of it. This idea, however, seems almost to have presupposed a certain easiness in the circumstances and condition of life of those to whom it was meant to apply. It appears to have presupposed the fact that they who were to be called upon so to assist in the administration of justice, would be persons not likely to suffer any serious loss or inconvenience, from being called to a duty imposed on them, without remuneration. But, here, the majority of those on whom the discharge of this duty falls, instead of being individuals in easy circumstances, are, on the contrary, persons whose pursuits and avocations are such as require to prosecuted with unremitted industry, diligence, and care, in order they may be enabled to earn a sufficient, for the ready provision for the daily wants of themselves and their families; and to men so tied down by the necessities and obligations of private life, the being compelled to attend as jurors at the Supreme Court, as jurors, is a very heavy tax indeed. Men are thus repeatedly obliged to abandon the most needful and pressing labors of the season—to travel considerable distances, and to subject themselves to the loss sustained by the abandonment of their labours at home—and the only remuneration made to them is one shilling each for every civil suit they happen to may at. In criminal cases they receive nothing. Some, not being drawn upon the Panel of a civil suit receive not even a single shilling, although obliged to attend the Supreme Court, as jurors. I have said that, to the majority of those who are thus compelled to attend the Supreme Court, the obligation is a very serious tax; and I may add—for I believe it to be as true—that, of all who are so called upon, there is scarcely one individual who does not feel it. I think a moderate allowance, per day, might be made to Petit Jurors; it would not bear heavily upon the Colony; but, yet, it would be an allowance of considerable importance to those for whom it should be provided. Three shillings a day, I think, would be about fair; and I do not intend to propose a higher sum. According to a calculation which I have made, the annual annually required, at this rate, for the remuneration of Petit Jurors, would not exceed £158 8s. 0d.—£86 8s. 0d. for the two District Counties, and £72 for Charlottetown. This amount, small as it was, would afford considerable relief to many, and would be not a little to take from the revenue. It is my opinion, however, that a higher allowance might be proposed with propriety. I think that, if it were allowed to each Petit Jurors, a shilling each, it would be some inducement to keep jurors in County, to be ready, when their names are called, to take their places in the jury-box. Three shillings and six pence a day would not, I think, be too high an allowance.

HOUSE RESUMED.

The original Resolution as submitted to the Committee, by the Hon. Mr. Palmer, was to the effect "That it is expedient to provide remuneration for Petit Jurors, for their attendance at the Supreme Court, at the rate of Three Shillings per day, for each day's actual attendance" and, in submitting the same, the hon. and learned gentleman, proposed that the Sum should be filled up with 2s 6d or 3s, or as the Committee might determine.

The Resolution reported from the Committee is as follows, with the amendment, which Mr. Palmer added, in Committee, on the motion of the Hon. Mr. Coles—

Resolved—That it is expedient to provide remuneration for Petit Jurors for their attendance at the Supreme Court, to the extent of Three Shillings per day, for each day's actual attendance; *and that the pay for the trial of Civil Cases be increased to Five Shillings, and paid out of the Court toward defraying the daily pay of the Jurors!*

The question being about to be put thereon by the Hon. the Speaker,

The Hon. Mr. Palmer moved to amend the same by striking out all the words after the word "attendance" in the said Resolution.

The House divided on the motion of amendment—

Yeas—Hon. Mr. Palmer, Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Macaulay, Mr. Campion, Mr. Haviland, Mr. Longworth, Mr. Macneill.

Nays—Hon. Mr. Coles, Hon. Mr. Thornton, Hon. Mr. Whelan, Hon Col. Treasurer, Mr. Wightman, Mr. Laird, Mr. Davies, Hon. Col. Secretary, Hon. Mr. Lord, Hon. Mr. Jardine, Mr. Clarke, Mr. Mooney, and Mr. Fraser.

So it passed in the negative.

The question being then put on the said Resolution, the House again divided:

Yeas—Hon. Mr. Palmer, Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Wightman, Mr. Macaulay, Mr. Campion, Mr. Laird, Lord, Mr. Macauley, Mr. Clark, Mr. Campion, and Mr. Macneill—10.

Nays—Hon. Mr. Coles, Hon. Mr. Thornton, Hon. Mr. Whelan, Mr. Longworth, Mr. Fraser, Hon. Col. Treasurer, Hon. Col. Secretary, Hon. Mr. Jardine, Mr. Haviland, and Mr. Davies—10.

And the numbers being equal, the Hon. Speaker, gave his casting vote in the affirmative. So it was carried in the affirmative.

R. B. Irving, Reporter.

CAPT. SLEIGH'S NEW WORK.

CHAPTER V.

CAPES TORMENTINE AND TRAVERSE. THE ICY PASSAGE.

In proceeding with my review of the various Maritime Provinces, I assume that the period is winter, and that my business requires me to cross Northumberland Straits, so as to reach Prince Edward Island. The dangers and difficulties of such an undertaking, will be understood by a perusal of the following personal narrative of the adventures and privations I experienced in the spring of 1852, in crossing over the Icy Straits.

The period was the first week in March, and I was desirous of proceeding from Halifax to the Island without further delay; for to wait for the usual time of travel by steamer from Pictou to Charlottetown, would entail the probable detention of a couple of months, as the navigation was not generally open, or free from ice, until the middle, or latter end of May. Having obtained all necessary information from friends in Halifax, and notwithstanding urgent recommendations that I would not risk a winter passage over the Gulf of the Straits, which was described as an undertaking of imminent peril and hazard to life and limb, which I did not heed, as in this instance I was obliged to proceed to Amherst, in Cumberland—"necessitas non habet leges," I booked myself a seat in Hyde's six-horse sleigh for Truro, Amherst, and New Brunswick.

The morning of our departure arrived, and at eight I crossed over to Dartmouth, opposite Halifax, and, taking my seat, was soon speeding onwards in a clear frosty atmosphere, with an exhilarating spirits known only to those who have inhaled the bracing breeze of our matchless northern clime. The horses became frisky, and playfully shaking their pretty heads in the air, the sleigh-bells chimed in pleasing tinkling chorus. We passed along the great chain of Lakes, stretching further mean the eye could range on the left, now silent, and frozen over with a dazzling mantle of snow, sparkling in the early sun's rays.

At Schultz we made our first stage, having travelled eighteen miles in less than two hours; here we got an excellent breakfast, and bidding good-bye to an old lady, my only fellow-passenger, I resigned myself to the company of my two mounted companions, and, instantly we glided over our smooth path, now passing some sledge laden with hay for the Halifax market, or the lighter curricle of the Provincial, through dense pine forests, now unlivened by a human sound; here presenting the appearance of some new Pine or Hacmatac clearing, there dark and burnt, with sapless branches, the mournful emblem of the ravages of recurring conflagration. During the day I met numerous tracks of the moose-deer.

At three we arrived at Truro, where the mails were transferred from sleigh to sleigh, and after partaking of a well-provided dinner at the table d'hote of the hotel, we resumed our seat, and under the guidance of a natty, shrewd little fellow, a native of Scotland, we soon left the village far behind, and one long commenced our ascent of the Cumberland Mountains. The path, in many places, bordered upon deep ravines, and it was very fearful, considering the ways we went at, that at some sharp turn, our light conveyance did not go over the brink of some yawning precipice, where, if we escaped from a broken neck, we would have been favourable of being smothered in the deep snowdrifts resting in the gullies. About ten at night we arrived at Sutherlands, a mountain inn, where to my delight I found a neat comfortable cottage, with a snug well-furnished room, in which a large wood fire merrily blazed on the hearth, imparting renewed life to my almost benumbed limbs. The landlady, a portly woman of very genteel, prepossessing exterior, soon attended to our wants, and before long a well-spread supper allayed the wolfishness of our appetites. We have seen a great deal of good humour at stewtioneering tour in the mountain district, for the Conservative candidate for the House of Assembly.

I was every when the horses were put to, and a summons from the driver warned me it was time to re-fur and cloak up, and go out once more into the chilling atmosphere. It was a pitch-dark night, and the cold was so intense soon a heavy fall of snow set in, and we were covered with a white mantle of crystalline flakes, which at any rate kept the warmth within, if it did not give the desired warmth to the nipping cold without. Dashing on, as we did, down steep declivities, round sharp angles of the mountain-road, and now and then plunging into soft drifts, which, considering the whole system, the drowsiness encouraged by the intense cold was kept off; and more closely hugging the buffalo robes, with a firm planting of the feet on the footboard of the sleigh, we awaited each renewed shock with stoical firmness. A cigar is some measure soothed the spirit; but even that luxury had to be abandoned, from the inability of lighting it without allowing the snowdrift full in the face.

After many narrow escapes, and several halt-ings to re-arrange and "fix up" the harness of our mettled steeds, at two in the morning we pulled up at the post-office of the village of Amherst, which is situated some half-mile out of the town, in a desolate log-hut. We were ushered into a parlour and alive, early as it was, to receive the mail-bags; and on expressing my surprise at his wakefulness and readiness to receive the mail, I was informed by the driver that he was ordinarily expected to perform once of his public duties. I should think so—with the thermometer below zero, and one solitary taper to cheer his lonely vigil!

On proceeding to the post-office with from Prince Edward had arrived, I was answered in the negative; and though two days over-due, it had not made its appearance: from which it was mustily apparent the ice had not been sufficiently able to cross the Straits. With a promise from the postmaster, that he would send the letter-carrier to me the moment the expected mail arrived, as I was waiting a conveyance in the mail-sledge to Cape Tormentine, I left for a small hotel, the best the town offered, where, after considerable difficulty, I roused the natives from their sleep, and got them to kindle a fire in my bed-room, with something warm within, I soon sought repose in a very comfortable bed, thoroughly weary and frozen out, after my trip of eighteen hours in open sleigh.

The following morning I got up early, and the Island mail not having arrived during the night, I determined to push on for Cape Tormentine, a distance of 16 miles, without further delay. A small sleigh was provided, well furnished with buffalo robes, and driven by a young American from Maine, whose sister for aught I knew, was contemplating the mates soon passed, and making a detour from the road, in consequence of the heavy snowdrift of the preceding night, which rendered it impassable, we commenced our journey, and after getting into some cornfields, where we floundered over half-bare hollows and ridges, in a manner sufficiently rough to set your teeth on edge. A steep declivity, the bottom of which was gained, and, more at ease, went at a glorious rate towards Bay Verte, where we arrived in less than two hours, without stoppage. The Bay was frozen over, and, from the stoke of some half-built ships, covered with snow, presented a melancholy appearance. After an hour's delay, to rest our steed, with "Alles!" from the driver—for your real Canadian horse scorns to exert his speed for the English vernacular—we again resumed our journey.

About eighteen miles off we met a sleigh approaching, and, from the wild, little crazy-looking individual was wildly blowing a horn, and on our nearing him, he shouted out, "Make way there, you fellows, for Her Majesty's mails!" We, of course, in turn, drew to one side, to glean the excited driver and his two equally excited companions, that the ice-boat had got over: such an awful passage! scarcely half-way, and, if ever there was a fine weather was fine, the ice-boat would go over again to-morrow." This pleasant information was wound up by a piece of advice: "Let the gentlemen go to Allan's, the best house in New Brunswick."

With this, away flew the curricle, and the woods re-echoed with the shouts of "Wild Tom," or "Wild Tom," the driver of Her Majesty's mail stage, in which the mail was designated. We were soon crossing the brittle sheet of ice which formed the surface of a salt-marsh abutting upon Cape Tormentine. The horses began to plunge and snort, and there, and on a slight eminence, with a belt of pine-wood in the background, stood the log-building of those respectable New Brunswickers, Allan and Hyde, with their spacious, and forlorn, —while before me I saw the Straits, covered—that was we—and can with a glorious expanse of ice, of every variety of shape and size; the field-ice, which is that which stretches from either shore for about a mile out, with a smooth glittering surface, was fringed with pyramidical masses of ice, shaped conical points thrown together, as if by some mighty convulsion of nature, some twenty, some ten feet high, their peaks forming a fearse-looking fleet, stretching in no bid defiance to human progress. Further out again, more mighty blocks rolled and thundered down the Straits, while the distant roar, of awful import, told of the tremendous conflict of tide and mad headlong passage of those icy masses.

A vast bank, apparently a couple of hundred feet high, white, shrouded with snow to the summit, and, from the appearance presented to the setting sun, which sank angry, red, and sullen in the west behind Bay Verte, stretched beyond the intervening gulf. "This then," I said, "is the Island!" "Island!" interrupted my informant, "what you see is not more than four miles off; Cape Traverse is nigh upon ten: that is a mass of bergs which have come down this afternoon with the tide from the north." "Heavens I muttered, "have I to cross this hideous Rubicon!"

I now entered Allan's hospitable abode, and was ushered into an apartment grandiloquently designated the "Governor's room," from the reminiscence of few days' sojourn of the Governor of Prince Edward, who, the previous week, had visited the Bay Verte, in Tormentine, for favourable omens, to warrant his attempting the passage over. This apartment was carpetless; two rickety chairs, an old deal table, and an American stove, with its accompanying most painfully, formed the unique and unostentatious embellishments of the regal room. A small door to the rear opened upon a recess, in which a bed occupied half the space, leaving, except half a foot, behind which the toilet was performed. The walls were planked, the floor and ceiling rivalling each other with al-fresco diversion of dirt.

I passed from this chamber into the public kitchen, where I found Arthur Irving, the conductor or captain of the ice-boat, and his crew, warming and drying themselves at the fire. A judge from their wearied appearance, they had had a hard time of it. Arthur looked particularly sad; for his narrow escape had caused reflective thought in him Irving hasn't—as I was, he expressed great pleasure at seeing me, having been on the look-out for me ever since the ice set in. After gleaning information regarding the Island, purchase, I requested Mother Allen to produce her best viands. These in time appeared, and consisted of slices of fried fat pork, with a large bowl of boiling grease to dip it in, and some watery potatoes, with a plate of brown doughy bread, rather inclined to a scurvish flavour. A cup of tea, which was also added, to the repast the more; while that everlasting accompaniment to every Provincial dinner, a teapot, completed the spread. I was hungry when I entered, but the appetite fingered, and I left, as much as the herring in the "White Horse of the Fuppe," and I soon rose from the table, after a very frugal repast.

I conferred about until nightfall, and then was only too glad to seek rest, and in deep forget the dulness which surrounded me, for it was wretchedly melancholy—that lonely log-hut perched on Cape Tormentine, with the howling round it, and the steep pattering at the windows.

In the morning at six I was roused by Irving; the wind had gone down over-night, and he reported the appearance of the Straits as favourable for a passage over. I was soon dressed. I put on my pair of American India-rubber jackboots, extending to the thigh; my fur cap with its tappets covered the ears; while gauntlet gloves of Astracan fur protected me to the elbows. Besides my portmanteau, I had a small carpet-bag, in which was a flask of pale brandy, a bundle of cigars, a box of lucifer-matches, and some slices of bread and pork. Thus provided, I bade farewell to old Allan and his wife, who forgotten, in their kindness, I had arrived at four in the morning, with the mails from Amherst, and who accompanied us as far as the shore-ice, to assist in starting the ice-boat, which we found keel upwards under a snowdrift.

On turning over the boat, underneath lay some oars, a couple of boat-hooks, a pole with a three-pronged iron hook, two Indian paddles, a hatchet, a small hammer, an old tin pot to bale with, a water-keg, a few old rusty nails in a bag, and one or two other unimportant encumbrances. The boat was about fifteen feet long, built of very slight planking, and sheeted outside with tin, while on each side of the keel, which was but a nominal one—for the boat was nearly flat-bottomed—were two runners, were placed parrell to each other, upon which the boat passed along the ice like a sledge.

The crew consisted of Irving the captain, and three stoutly-built men, who, as a passenger, the master of a coasting craft which had been frozen in the Gut of Canso, and myself,—six in all. Our preparations were soon made for starting. The bags containing the mails were placed in the bottom of the boat, and my portmanteau in the centre, while the crapet-bag was tied under one of the seats. Limited to freighing—as we were only to carry what could possibly be avoided, as it is all-important, for passage on the surface of the ice, that it be light. We were now placed in order: three stood on either side of the boat, a leather strap was passed over the right shoulder of those on the larboard, and left shoulder of those on the starboard side, meeting under the opposite armpit. The boat was then attached by an iron chain, which was fastened inside the gunwale of the boat. We were thus harnessed, with our faces to the bows, one hand firmly holding the gunwale, the body stretched slightly forward; and, at the word "Start!" each man equally drew the boat, and thus, from a walking pace we got into a trot, then a canter, and, the speed once on, we were dashing over the surface of the ice, with the cheering "Pull hearty, my boys!" of our conductor, the boat gliding on the runners.

In crossing, a passenger must work the same as one of the crew, as it is impossible to give him an idle seat in the boat, from the increased weight which would be thus caused, and consequently lessen the speed, and, unless those muscular exertions the light craft is propelled: and, as will be seen further on, when casualties occur, extra weight might lead to the swamping of the boat.

We had proceeded about a mile on the shore-ice, when we halted for a few moments to enable us to remove our outer garments, which had become uncomfortably hot from the rapid exercise had created. Away went coats, wrappers, and gauntlets, into the boat, and with only my shooting-jacket on, after a drink of water and toasted bread, we resumed our way. We had soon reached the extent of the shore-ice, and now commenced our labours. All unfastened the straps from off the shoulder, as a long ridge of ice had to be crossed, and portaged. Irving sprang forward with a line, and clambered up a mass of ice some fifteen feet high; we got the boat hoisted over, and, with a single, ringing full strength, we pushed the boat upwards after him; a couple of the crew now mounted on the top of the ice, and getting the bows of the boat well on the ice, we gently overbalanced her, and down she glided on the other side.

I found it a most difficult task to follow these nimble fellows; my India-rubber boots caused me continually to slip, and tumble over the ice where no snow lay; but having gone head-over-heels half-a-dozen times, I soon became familiar with the ups and downs of my journey. In the chaunting of the Irving, I, by rote, the easiest way to gain the other side was to slide down on my back; this in some instances became a dangerous experiment, as in the gullies between the ridges of ice, a little water usually collected to the depth of several feet; and, on going down a rather steep declivity, I found myself up to the armpits in broken ice, snow, and water, and Irving being nigh he was stationed at me, otherwise I ran a fair chance of disappearing. This rendered me more cautious in my sliding experiments, for the masses of ice thus broken, floated about, and, if not immediately nected at the base, floating independently of the others around. More than two hours were occupied in crossing a quarter of a mile of this barrier, during which time we passed a large floe from the northward and eastward, which drove over the bergs towards the New Brunswick shore, and having blown a gale, the masses were thrown with the greatest violence, and presented every fantastic shape the imagination can conceive.

On reaching the last ridge, we had an opportunity of looking out upon the Straits. Further than the eye could see were enormous fields of ice, with black patches and streaks here and there, appearing like ink from the contrast with the surrounding white, or open water. A snowdrift soon obscured the horizon, but passing away to the south, we lost no time in launching the boat into a surging mass of broken drift-ice. The pilotage through this was most difficult: all hands were engaged with boat-hooks, paddles, and oars, in shoving away one block, drawing onto towards another, or with united strength pushing some larger obstruction to one side. Then we would come to a patch of field-ice about a hundred feet broad: each mass stepped from the stern towards the bows, and, as we neared the other side, we succeeded in making a few hundred yards of distance, but frequently not in our right course, as the noon tide, which set in with a strong southerly gale, carried us a couple miles to leeward far to that quarter, as our direction was east by north. To regain our lost ground, we had to make long, larger fields of ice, hauling the boat on it, head up at a rapid canter. It was a strange feeling, when drawing the ice-boat along on the runners, and proceeding at the rate of three miles an hour, to know what the field upon which we stood was—perhaps not more than rent away to the south at the rate of five miles an hour. Thus we were propelling the boat north-east, while the tide was carrying us towards the south-west. The experience of the conductors of the boat is here called into active