

Mr. LANGEVIN. There has been no action taken on this matter.

#### TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION WITH SABLE ISLAND.

Mr. PAINT enquired, When telegraphic communication will be established between Nova Scotia and Sable Island?

Mr. LANGEVIN. This matter is now under the consideration of my Department.

#### GULF TELEGRAPH LINE.

Mr. PAINT enquired, Whether the great benefits conferred on the fishermen and shipping interest in the Gulf of St. Lawrence by the daily reports furnished by the Government coast line telegraph, shall be in like manner extended to the shores of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Cape Breton as first contemplated, and when?

Sir LEONARD TILLEY. When the Estimates are brought down, we will be able to state to the hon. gentleman whether the Government can make provision for that expenditure this year or not. The matter is now under consideration.

#### BREAKWATER AT BLANDFORD, N.S.

Mr. KEEFLER enquired, Whether it is the intention of the Government to make provision in the Estimates during this Session for the extension of the breakwater at Blandford, in the county of Lunenburg?

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. I have the honor to inform the hon. gentleman that there is no information about this work in the Department.

#### STEAM COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND AND THE MAIN LAND.

Mr. JENKINS moved the appointment of a Select Committee to consider the question of steam communication between Prince Edward Island and the main land in winter and summer, with power to send for persons, papers and records; said Committee to consist of Messrs. Hackett, McIntyre, Wood (Westmoreland), McIsaac and the mover. He said: I would not have considered it necessary to occupy the attention of the House on this subject, except for the fact that when it was up for discussion on Monday night some hon. member expressed opinions adverse to the appointment of a Committee. They seemed to think that there was nothing to enquire about, and that the appointment of a Committee would lead to delay. I may say I have given the subject a great deal of consideration. So long ago as 1867 I made it a subject of a motion in the Local Legislature of the Island, and since that time I have paid a good deal of attention to it; but I must confess that I feel that I am not in possession of sufficient information to give a positive opinion on it, and I find, in conversation with others, that those who know the least about the matter are most inclined to give a positive and dogmatic opinion as to the impossibility of winter communication. I consider the question is one surrounded with difficulties. Not only are the Government not in possession of sufficient information to warrant them in making a large expenditure of public money on this service, but there are also other difficulties. The different sections and different districts of the Island all seem to think they have a right to have the steamer ply between their point of communication and the main land. Those sectional jealousies and conflicting interests have to be dealt with, and the jealousies will be allayed, and the conflicting interests reconciled by the appointment of this Committee, because it is essentially representative, each county in the Island having a member on it, and the Pro-

Mr. HOMER.

vinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia having also a member each. I think, therefore, that the labors of this Committee are likely, not only to acquire information which will be valuable to the Government, and enable them to take action in this matter, but that they will also allay sectional jealousies and remove difficulties of this kind. Now, Sir, it is very easy to say that no vessel can be built to cross the Straits of Prince Edward Island and the main land in winter. I allow that no such vessel has ever been built, but I consider that this is an age of progress, and I consider it quite possible that it can be built. It will be in the memory, I dare say, of some hon. members of the House, that when the question of ocean steam navigation was discussed some years ago, a former Lord Derby—the grandfather, I believe, of the present Minister for the Colonies—said that no steamer would ever cross the Atlantic. I believe that persons who have just as firm faith in the impossibility of the winter navigation of the straits, have as little basis for their opinions; and I am quite sure that this question will be satisfactorily solved, and I think that the appointment of this Committee will prove to be the first step towards its solution. With regard to the delay, it must be remembered that the Steam Navigation Company of Prince Edward Island had their contract extended for two years, and until that period expires there can be no change made, as far as steam communication is concerned; but on the first opportunity that presents itself an improvement should be made. I think that the Steam Navigation Company of Prince Edward Island have done very good service. It is the fashion rather to grumble about and to abuse that company, but I think that when we look back and remember that this company has carried mails and passengers for nearly twenty years, with very few casualties, it will be admitted that they deserve some credit instead of abuse. During the last few years there has been a great expansion in our trade with the neighboring Provinces, owing, as I believe, and as I think most hon. members believe, to the National Policy; the mining and manufacturing interests of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have increased to such an extent, that they have taken a very large portion of our produce, and on that account the resources of the Steam Navigation Company have not been sufficient, during this last year, to carry all our produce to those Provinces; so much has trade in that direction, owing to the increased necessities of those Provinces, due to the growth of their mining and manufacturing interests, extended. Now, Sir, I believe that this company ought to put a third good boat on that route during next season, in order that they may be able to keep trade clear. I think, Sir, that this House will agree that the selection of this Committee is the first step towards the solution of this question, which is of such very great importance to the people of Prince Edward Island.

Mr. DAVIES. Mr. Speaker, I am very sorry, for several reasons, that my hon. colleague has thought it consistent with his duty to make this motion on this occasion, and because I know and believe—or would rather believe—that he is thoroughly sincere in his advocacy of this question. I am further sorry, because I think that it will merely lead to delay, and can do no possible good. I know that my hon. colleague has a strong desire to make motions referring all sorts of matters to Committees, for that was his course when I occupied a seat with him in the Local Legislature; whenever any question then came up, my hon. friend would move its reference to a Committee, and I never saw any good come out of it. I am perfectly sure that no good will come of this reference, and for this reason: because the Government have already taken steps in this matter. In the year 1878 they appointed a competent man, Mr. McLeod, a Civil