

Mr. E. M. MACDONALD. Yes.

Mr. A. A. WRIGHT. A nice state of affairs, is it not?

Mr. E. M. MACDONALD. As my hon. friend is one of those gentlemen who are perfectly willing to build a tunnel that will be operated all the year around at a heavy cost, I presume he will not object to this. We must always remember that the maintaining of this service both in summer and in winter by the Dominion is one of the terms of confederation, and whether the loss is small or great the service must be carried on by the government. The only point under discussion is whether the management of that service should be under the Railway or the Marine Department. It seems to me that it would be very much more satisfactory to have the whole system of transportation there under the management of one department. There would, of course, be difficulties but it would appear that the greatest difficulties complained of would be overcome by the step proposed. Owing to the division of authority between the two departments claims cannot be readily adjusted, but I would point out to my hon. friends from the island that the difficulty of securing the adjustment of claims by business men is not confined to Prince Edward Island, but is common to the entire Intercolonial system, as it must be from the nature of the case where you have government ownership of railways, and it is not possible to recover damages for torts against the railway but have to proceed by the tortuous process of application for petition of right and trial in the Exchequer Court. If a cow is injured in transportation or a box is broken open then this tortuous process must be resorted to in order to secure redress and this is a cause of serious inconvenience and complaint among business men throughout the maritime provinces. I hope that the minister will look into this question of claims so that the business men of the maritime provinces may have some safe, sure and ready method by which to have their claims adjusted. I do not know whether under any system of government operation the difficulty could be obviated; under such a system it must always exist in some degree, but I hope that the minister will rearrange the claims department of the Intercolonial Railway so as to afford more prompt readjustment of claims. My hon. friend's remarks on this subject deserve as much attention from the minister as any other portion of the resolution. The portion of the resolution which involves the placing of the service across the Straits of Northumberland under the control of the Railway Department receives my strongest support.

Mr. A. A. LEFURGEY (Prince, P.E.I.). I am very pleased to note the change that is coming over the spirit of the dreams of the

hon. gentlemen opposite—for they have been dreaming for a long time—in regard to the resolution before us. For the past seven or eight years members on this side of the House have time and again brought up the important matter of transportation across the Straits of Northumberland and the excessive rates under which we suffer. Members on the other side of the House have had ample opportunity to put forth their views, and some of them, I am glad to find, are waking up and telling us what they think. The mover of this resolution has had several occasions during the present session to bring up this question of freight rates, for instance, when the Railway Commission was being discussed and when the tunnel resolution of my hon. friend from Queens (Mr. A. Martin) was before the House, but upon those occasions he took the opportunity to apologize for the government. Now, however, I am glad to see that he has awakened from his dream, and sees at last that the government have not used all the means in their power to endeavour to overcome the wrongs under which the people of my province have been suffering for a great number of years. But after all, Mr. Speaker, the solution of this whole question is to be found in giving us an up to date means of transportation, such as was promised to us thirty odd years ago, and which we have been fighting for ever since in this House. We have urged upon the government to go forward and fulfil the promise that the leader of this House made when he was in opposition, and give the people of the island a tunnel. That is after all the only solution that will end our complaints. The hon. member for Pictou (Mr. Macdonald) said that we must not overlook natural conditions. Well, that is why we are discussing this question in the House, it is because the government have been overlooking natural conditions. We realized these natural conditions when we came into confederation, and it was the realization of these natural conditions that brought Prince Edward Island into the confederation, with a promise from the Dominion that they would be overcome. And how were they to be overcome? By bringing the island system of railways into connection with the mainland system. Now, that is the whole solution of this excessive rate question. The hon. member for Pictou says we have got to overcome these natural conditions. That was the promise made at confederation, and in the meantime, while the government is not using the means at hand to overcome them, is not prepared to put before this House surveys and estimates for a tunnel, our shippers to and from the island should not be put under the obligation to pay the piper on these short hauls, but the loss should be made up to them by the government by equalization of rates. Instead of that we find from an answer made the other day to my hon. friend from Queens (Mr.