

to look at the matter in that light, and in 1873 they accepted the terms in good faith and became part of this Confederation. From that time until 1876 nothing of any great importance was done to carry out the terms of the Union. Of course, during 1874 not much could be expected, as it was the first year the island was in the Union. But in 1875, the Government of the hon. member for East York (Mr. Mackenzie) placed a boat between Pictou and Georgetown for the purpose of carrying out the terms to some extent. That boat was known as the *Alert*. But she was not built for that service, and she proved a complete failure. The people of the island did not expect much at that time, but they were clamoring; and the Government, no doubt urged by the representatives of the Province, purchased the *Northern Light*, which was then on the stocks at Quebec. This boat was not built for navigating the ice in the gulf, but for navigating the lower St. Lawrence. The builder of the vessel, Mr. Sewell, thought he could keep up the navigation, and the boat was purchased for that purpose. That boat has proved, to a certain extent, a failure. She has done the work, to some extent, as the hon. member for Queen's has said, and as the mover of this motion has admitted; but as for completely fulfilling the terms of union, she has not done so, as she was not intended for that service. Mr. Sewell was here in 1879 or 1880, and I had the pleasure of an interview with him. He said that the boat was too light for that service, and he advocated cutting her in two and adding twenty or thirty feet to her. However, his suggestion was not acted upon, and she was sent down to the island, and I cannot say that there was any jobbery or corruption in connection with that boat. She made the attempt to go into the harbor of Charlottetown and she failed, and was laid up for that year. The next year Mr. Sewell went down, and managed to keep up some communication. Now, the mover of this resolution says the boat is not adapted to that service. I can quote very good authority on that subject—Captain Archibald Finlayson, who had been on that boat, and who was examined before the committee referred to by the hon. member for Queen's, as follows:—

"What is your occupation?—I am a master mariner and pilot on the *Northern Light*.

"How long have you been pilot on the *Northern Light*?—Six winters.

"And are you still?—Yes.

"And pilot on the summer boats, too?—Yes.

"How many years have you been pilot?—Sixteen years.

"Sixteen consecutive years?—Yes."

You will agree with me that this is a gentleman whose opinion upon these matters ought to carry great weight. He was asked what was the best model for establishing communication, and he said a Newfoundland steamer.

"Do you think they could be hurried through the ice the same as the *Northern Light*; do you think they would do better than the *Northern Light*, if in a hurry and on the same route?—Yes, if they had power enough; but these Newfoundland boats have not nearly the same power that we have.

"But you think their model is superior to that of the *Northern Light*?—Yes."

Then he was asked if the boat would not do better if managed in the way Captain Sewell expected her to be managed, that is, when she got on the ice, she was to be rolled, so as to break the ice ahead of her. He was asked:

"When we had an interview with Captain Sewell he spoke of (when the vessel got into the ice) of rolling her; were you on board of her when he was there?—No, I was not on her the first winter.

"He tried that, did he not?—Yes, but it would be impossible to keep rolling her.

"That was the idea he had when he got up the model?—I do not know where the poor man got the model."

This pilot of the *Northern Light* had such a poor opinion of her that he did not know where Capt. Sewell got the model. Now, the mover of this motion made reference to the steamer *Alert*. She is a Newfoundland steamer, and she is no doubt a good model for cutting through the ice, but I

Mr. HACKERT.

understand that she has not sufficient power. She has only an engine of 40 or 50 horse-power, which is not sufficient to keep up navigation between the island and the mainland. If the engine and boiler of the *Northern Light* were in the *Alert* she would be able to keep up the service better than the *Northern Light*, but I do not at all advocate the placing of an old vessel like the *Alert* on the service. The *Northern Light* is very much the worse of wear, and in a year or two more will become a complete wreck. Therefore, I think, it becomes the duty of the Government to construct a boat specially for that service, from the experience they now have of the *Northern Light*. We will know what is required, and make such improvements as are necessary in the building of a good boat for the purpose of keeping up communication between the island and the mainland. The committee to which the hon. member for Queen's (Mr. Davies) referred, and which sat here, in 1883, for the purpose of investigating this matter, made a report containing certain recommendations. The hon. gentleman said no honest attempts had been made to carry out the terms of Confederation with the island. Well, I do not know what he would call an honest attempt, but I think the expenditure of money by the present Government has been in the direction of making an honest attempt to keep up the communication. Let the hon. gentleman look at the report of the committee, and he will find that, after careful examination of all the evidence that could be obtained from men experienced in steam navigation and as captains of ice boats crossing the Straits, the committee reported:

"The evidence of the officers examined is also to the effect that the steamer is not sufficient to overcome the difficulties of the winter navigation, and although they suggest slight improvements on her model which would better fit her for the purposes for which she was intended, still are unanimously of opinion that no steamship can be built capable of keeping up continuous communication in midwinter between the island and the mainland."

Thus, it was the opinion of that committee that no steamer could be constructed which would continuously keep up communication; and this opinion was reached after mature consideration and the examination of witnesses of great experience in these matters. Now, I say the expenditure of this Government has been in the direction of honestly and faithfully carrying out the terms of the union. The hon. gentleman knows that, in 1883, a sum was voted by this Parliament for the purpose of constructing a branch railway connecting the Island Railway with Cape Traverse; he knows that a subsidy was granted to a company for the construction of a railway on the mainland, between Sackville and Cape Tormentine, thus bringing the railways down to the water's edge, and leaving only the straits, a distance of eight miles, to be overcome, and to overcome which an hon. gentleman in another place has matured a scheme, known as the subway or tunnel scheme, which has for object the laying down of a submarine tunnel between the island and the mainland. That tunnel can all the more readily be constructed, now that the railways are down to the water's edge. It will require, of course, an expenditure of a large amount of money, but the people of Prince Edward Island consider, if the building of the tunnel be feasible and practicable—and we have the authority of an engineer of such high standing as the hon. member for Grenville (Mr. Shanly) that it is, and will not cost the sum of \$5,000,000,—the Government should offer subsidies to a company to build the tunnel, or build the tunnel themselves. I say, therefore, that the building of the railways to the water's edge, leaving only the straits to be crossed, has been an expenditure in the right direction, and has shown an honest attempt on the part of the Government to keep faith with the island. But further expenditure has also taken place. The hon. gentleman is so extremely partisan, that, even in discussing a question of