

HON. MR. PROWSE—Is that a statement to which my name is attached ?

HON. MR. POIRIER—I find the name of Mr. Prowse attached to it.

HON. MR. PROWSE—I never signed such a statement.

HON. MR. POIRIER—I said that I had not seen the report.

HON. MR. PROWSE—My name may have been attached to it, because in 1873 I was examined before a committee of the House of Commons in reference to this question, and my opinions are there given in their report. Of that engineer I know nothing, and have never met him, that I remember.

HON. MR. POIRIER—He does not say that he approached the hon. gentleman, but he says that this is the result of an examination made by a commission of which the hon. gentleman was a member. There was a priest at Richibucto, Mr. Carson, who writes as follows:—

“That the Straits never freeze, that the ice which comes from the north is broken up into small patches, and that between these scattered bodies there is always an open channel, where a steamer could pass without the slightest difficulty ; that a pier could be built 250 to 300 yards from the shore clear of the beech ice, where the depth will be from 18 to 20 feet—and that if such a vessel were to be put on this route it would be able to make regular trips every day in the year.”

“We find that the heavy ice comes from the east and north-east down from the Straits of Belle Isle through St. George’s Bay and becomes blocked or gorged at the Cape Tormentine and Traverse (a distance a little over 40 miles south-east from Cape Richibucto) and that which passes Cape Wolf is the light ice from the Gulf of St. Lawrence carried by the tides into Egmont and Halifax bays, where it remains until dissolved. The testimony on this point is unanimous, and therefore beyond dispute.”

I will not take up the time of the House by reading any more extracts. This is sufficient to show that there is ground for the Government to study the question, to investigate the feasibility of establishing constant communication through the winter season, as well as through the summer, between those two points that I have mentioned. Dr. de Bertram is so convinced of the feasibility of the scheme that he is ready to invest large amounts of money himself to undertake the project. Of course, he would not undertake such a scheme if he saw that the Government were to favor some other enterprise which would be hostile to it; but the gentleman would be glad to know if the Government

are willing to send engineers to examine the route. It is in the interests of Prince Edward Island and of New Brunswick, and I may say in the interest of the whole Dominion, which is required every year to meet a deficit on the Prince Edward Island Railway, which might be a paying road if the people of the Island had facilities for exporting their produce in the winter season. It would increase the revenue of the road sufficiently to enable the Government to collect a revenue equal to the expenditure. Several attempts have been made to establish communication between Prince Edward Island and the mainland, but a remarkable feature of such attempts is this: It appears that nature has provided that the proper place for such communications is at the west end, while the capitalists and gentlemen interested in the communication are located up towards the east, or have their interests in the east. Thus it happens that mostly all the efforts to establish communication have been made between Charlottetown and Pictou, or between Cape Traverse and Cape Tormentine. It strikes me, and everyone who has studied the question, that such were not the views or the designs of nature. That part of the island where the attempts have hitherto been made is blocked by heavy ice every winter, not only local ice, but heavy ice coming from the Atlantic by way of the Straits of Belle Isle and from the east generally. The reason of this is that that ice which is carried in by east winds, added to the local ice, forms jams, through which it is impossible for a steamboat of any power that the ingenuity of man could devise can get through. Moreover, the Bay of Pictou freezes very hard in winter, and that accounts for the “Stanley” being imprisoned there this last winter. At the other end of the Island the passage is clear, because no ice is to be found there, except local ice, and that place is almost constantly as free in winter as it is in summer, making it feasible, without having to struggle with such obstacles as I have mentioned, to have free communication between these two points in winter as well as in summer. Hon. gentlemen will understand that if a service by steam ferry boats can be established so as to carry loaded cars from one side of the Strait to the other, connecting the Prince Edward Island system of railway