

was the intention of the hon. member from Niagara, although the enquiry as stated on the paper is not exactly in the form which is customary in this House. Bourinot, in his work on Parliamentary Practice, page 322, says :—

“The more regular, and now the more common practice, is for a member, in cases requiring some discussion, to give notice that he will call attention on a future day to a public matter, and make an enquiry of the Government on the subject. Then it is perfectly legitimate to discuss the whole question at length, as the terms of the notice show the intention of the person who puts it on the paper.”

Now, I am not prepared to say that the terms of the motion do not give notice of the intention of the mover, but I think it would be more in accordance with the practice of this House, which has been followed for some time, if the hon. member from Niagara would modify his notice in the way indicated.

HON. MR. PLUMB—I have no objection whatever to modify this question in any way in which the object I desire will be attained. I am not at this moment prepared to refer to any proceedings, but I think the notice is in conformity with the usage of the House of Lords. I will not state that positively, but with the permission of the House, if it is found that it is desirable to modify the motion, I certainly am most desirous to do so; and I am very much obliged to my hon. friend, the senior member for Halifax, for calling my attention to it, and if there be any irregularity in the notice I shall be glad to have it corrected.

WINTER COMMUNICATION
WITH P. E. I.

ENQUIRY.

HON. MR. HAYTHORNE—I think that the enquiry of which I have given notice is strictly in conformity with the terms of the rule just laid down by his Honor the Speaker. It is as follows :—

That he will call the attention of the Senate to the insufficiency of the steamship “Northern Light” for the performance of the mail and passenger service between Georgetown and Pictou, more particularly in early spring—and will ask the leader of the Government in this House whether it is intended to place another vessel on that route, as consort of the “Northern Light;” and if so, when?

My reason for making this separate motion is because I wish to keep this branch of the subject of communication with the mainland separate from the other, which refers to a particular case; and my special reason for calling attention to it to-day is, because I was a witness last spring of circumstances which, in my view, involved grave risk to numerous valuable lives. I may state at once my belief that the steamer “Northern Light” is in good condition; that great pains have been taken to strengthen all her weak parts and put her in a state of efficiency; but her capacity is small. Although not a very small vessel, a large part of her space is occupied by engines and boilers, freight and luggage. Of course the commander is not absolutely bound to carry freight; nevertheless it is carried. The luggage of a large number of passengers piled on her deck is no trifling matter. On my return home from my duties in this House last spring, I was detained on the mainland for two or three days awaiting a change of weather which would enable the “Northern Light” to come to Pictou. A telegram informed us that she had left Georgetown on her passage, but she was evidently hindered by adverse winds and the presence of very considerable quantities of ice in the straits. Ultimately she arrived safely, bringing, as it was said, about 100 passengers. Her mails and what freight she brought were of course soon delivered and every dispatch was made to enable the vessel to return to the Island that same afternoon. She actually effected the passage, but the point to which I wish to draw the attention of this House, and particularly the attention of the Government, is that there were from 75 to 87 passengers on board on her return. I say 75; my hon. friend who sits opposite (Mr. Montgomery) to me says there were 87 passengers on board, but this I have no hesitation in saying, that even with the smaller number and their luggage on board, and such freight as that vessel was capable of carrying, there was barely standing room, to say nothing of sitting room, or the accommodation which one expects to find in a passenger steamer. I leave it to this House, composed of intelligent and experienced men in all walks of life, to say whether it is a thing to be desired or tolerated, that year after