

navigation the mails to and from Prince Edward Island, up to, I may say, a fortnight ago at all events, have been carried with unusual punctuality. There is, under existing circumstances, but little to complain of in that behalf, but I regret to say that although there has been at the disposal of the Government improved means of communication, the full benefit which might have been derived by passengers from the improved means has not been invariably reaped by them. For example, last Session or the Session before, the hon. minister opposite (Sir Alex. Campbell) engaged on behalf of the Government that for one thing the *Northern Light* steamship (which hon. members will bear in mind was built specially for this service) would be put in a thorough state of repair, and the Government intended to build a vessel capable of performing a similar service, to be available in case of necessity. That the *Northern Light* has undergone very substantial repairs is quite apparent from the fact that she weathered one of the most serious storms that have taken place on the shores of the Maritime Provinces for many years. A day or two after Christmas that vessel was exposed to a storm of extreme severity, yet she weathered it safely, and though obliged to return to port, the delay occasioned by repairing the damages was not more than two days. We have every reason, therefore, to be satisfied with the performance of the *Northern Light*. She made her trips from Georgetown to Pictou and return daily. But suddenly, from no apparent reason that I have heard of, or any individual in Prince Edward Island could divine, the special mail train which was kept in attendance on this steamer in order that the public might reap the full benefit of the passage through in one day, was discontinued, and though mails and passengers were delivered on the island, they could go no farther than Georgetown unless the ordinary express train happened to be available to carry them, until the next day. This was found to be so serious a grievance, and one so utterly unnecessary and uncalled for in every way, that public opinion declared itself strongly against the Government, and they had to recognize that there was a feeling in the Province to which they must yield. The grievance was redressed and

the special mail train was replaced on the route. I only allude to this to show what occurred on one occasion there on a Saturday evening. The *Northern Light* had that day made the trip to and from Pictou, but instead of finding the special train, as usual, awaiting the arrival of the steamer, the passengers and mails were detained forty hours in Georgetown before they were moved. That, as I have explained, was altered because public opinion was a little too strong even for the Government. We all thought in Prince Edward Island that such an unusually fine season as we were enjoying would enable the Government to keep the steamer on the route to a late date. There was a total absence of severe frost and heavy snow storms, yet the vessel was suddenly removed and taken to Souris. Some of us were in hopes that an experiment was to be tried on a route which has found favor with not a few experienced mariners—that she would be put on the route between Souris and Cape George. My hon. friend from Pictou can confirm what I say, that the harbor of Pictou remained open for several weeks afterwards—was open until a week ago at all events—while the *Northern Light* remained snugly at her mooring in Souris Harbor. I have heard since leaving my home, that she had been ordered out again; what the result will be I cannot say. Thus it seems that the Government have been slow to take advantage even of the means of conveyance which they had at their disposal in this case. Leaving that branch of the subject, I recur now to the alternative route which the people of Prince Edward Island are able to avail themselves of in winter—that is between Capes Traverse and Tormentine, a distance of about eight miles, which is passed over by means of very small ice-boats. The Government were advised by a committee of the House of Commons which sat on this question, and by others, myself amongst them, that this service should no longer be left in private hands—that it should be taken in hand by the Government and run as a public service; and after many hard struggles the Government were induced to do so. I recollect, myself, coming to my place in this House two or three sessions ago, having attended a short time previously an indignation meeting, where the people ex-