

there was a feeling of great disappointment in the Island, because, after the year 1878, when the present Government came into power, nothing was done in reference to that question, although the Island was represented in the Ministry. I think I am not going beyond the facts in stating that up to this time, since the advent of the present Government to power in 1878, not a single step has been taken in connection with this service, with the exception of the motion made by the hon. Minister of Railways last Session for the construction of the branch railway. Time and again we are promised that efforts would be made to fulfil the compact, but so far nothing has been done. We are willing to acknowledge, indeed subsequent events have shown that the late Minister of Marine and Fisheries was not, perhaps, altogether responsible for his neglect in that matter. I should be very sorry, in the present sad condition of his mind, to say a word which would reflect on him or hurt the feelings of his friends. We are disposed to acknowledge that it was owing to the fact that his health was breaking up that nothing was done, because if he had possessed the push that once characterized him in public life he would have taken steps to have had the agreement carried out. I will do him that justice; I believe he is excused on that ground by people generally, because subsequent events have shown that his mind was more or less giving way, and that he was not able to grapple with questions in the able way in which he had once dealt with them. In 1880 the people began to think that it was time for them to move, and through their representatives in the Local Parliament they presented a joint address to His Excellency the Governor General, which set forth the shortcomings of the Dominion Government in this respect. I have refreshed my mind by looking over that address, and I see the charges are very plain and specific; and I wish to call the attention of hon. gentlemen opposite, particularly the Minister of Railways, who, I believe, takes great interest in this question, to the fact that the address was voted unanimously, by both branches of the Legislature, and by both political parties. I am proud to say it has not been made a political question, at all events for the last year or two. It was made a political question, however, when the late Government were in power, and we deprecated that mode of treating the question; but since the present Government have been in power it has not been made a political issue, because we believe the best interests of the Island will be advanced by all parties joining hands to aid the Government to do what is reasonable and just. We do not demand anything unfair, or that which cannot be carried out. We submit that this compact, made with the Dominion, can be carried out without Prince Edward Island receiving anything unfair in the shape of a money grant, or asking the Government to do a thing which is impossible. I do not deny that some people ask impossible things. I received papers containing resolutions from Prince Edward Island to-day, asking for more than I can approve, resolutions not calculated to advance the question, because they ask for the impossible. But we do not ask anything of the kind; we ask simply what is reasonable and just. No notice was taken by the Dominion Government of the address passed in 1880, further than to acknowledge in a despatch to the Lieut.-Governor that such an address had been received. When the Local Legislature met last year, I looked through the Journals to see what had taken place. I found that the hon. the First Minister telegraphed to the Local Premier stating that he was fully alive to the importance of the question. I am not aware that any member of the Government has ever denied that we have a grievance which ought to be remedied; they all acknowledge the fact, but we get nothing more than a simple acknowledgment, and that does not give us continuous communication. The hon. the First Minister telegraphed, on the 21st March, as follows:—

Mr. DAVIES.

OTTAWA, March 21st, 1882.

HON. W. W. SULLIVAN.

The Government are giving their earnest consideration to the question of winter communication between your Island and the mainland. I will write in a day or two.

(Signed)

JOHN A. MACDONALD.

I am not aware whether the First Minister found time to write at greater length; no letter has ever been published in our Journals or in the records of this House. But the Government were giving their earnest attention to the question then, and I hope and trust that before very long we shall hear from the lips of some of the hon. gentlemen responsible for the carrying out of the compact the result of that earnest consideration, and what the Government has determined to do. That telegram was sent shortly before the local elections. I would not for a moment intimate that it was intended to have any effect on the elections. I am sure the hon. gentleman would not attempt anything of the kind, but it came down just before the local elections took place, and was circulated throughout the length and breadth of the Island. Mark you, it was promulgated through the Island for years, that the late Government were no friends to the people, but that the present Government were their friends and would do everything for them. The people waited. Nothing was received in answer to the joint address sent to the Governor General beyond a simple acknowledgment of its receipt, but a telegram was sent just before the local elections stating that the Dominion Government were earnestly considering the subject, and I hope the result of that consideration will be that the Government will come to the conclusion—it is the only conclusion that they ought to come to—that the matter should be practically dealt with, and that at once; that they will acknowledge the justice of our case and not keep it open any longer. After that telegram came down they went to the polls, and the Local Government were sustained by a very narrow majority—I do not know whether they would have been sustained at all except for that telegram. They were, however, sustained by a narrow majority, and are no doubt willing that the subject should receive the earnest consideration which the hon. gentleman is willing to give it. The Mackenzie Government, in addition to building the *Northern Light* and placing her on the route between Georgetown and Pictou, had a survey made for a railway between Cape Traverse and the Island railway; and if they had been returned to power in 1878, no doubt they would have completed the surveys and built the road. In introducing a Bill for the construction of a branch railway in Prince Edward Island, the Hon. the Minister of Railways last Session said the Dominion Government had entirely failed to carry out its obligations to Prince Edward Island. I quote from *Hansard*:

“To carry out the engagement of the Dominion Government with Prince Edward Island, the Dominion Government had the steamer *Northern Light* constructed, but that steamer, though effecting considerable improvement in the existing communications, entirely failed in maintaining continuous communication. The late Government directed a survey to be made between the Intercolonial Railway and Cape Tormentine on the one side and Cape Traverse and the Island Railway on the other. This survey was completed and a Report made by the able engineer appointed by the late Government, recommending the best points for railway connection. And we are now carrying out the policy contemplated by the late Government in ordering this survey to be made.”

The hon. gentleman thus attempted by a Bill which he introduced subsequent to his speech on the construction of the railway, to carry out the policy of the late Government; but they have not made any further proposal with a view to remedy evils which admittedly exist. Just before the late elections you could not visit any district of the Island without meeting one or two officials connected with the survey. We do not complain of that for we were glad to see them; but what we do complain of is the delay which