

The leader of the Government in the Senate was not responsible, and why? He says:

"I made that promise with the authority of the then Minister of Marine and Fisheries, and, as is my constant practice, the very day the promise was made, I wrote to the Minister of Marine and Fisheries that, pursuant to what he had told me, I made the promise, and that I hoped he would keep it in mind. I afterwards called attention to it, and there were reasons which were more or less sound—I can hardly say sound—which made the delay more or less excusable."

That is the answer—the official answer that at this day is given to the people of the island who have been for so many years complaining, and justly complaining, of the bitter injustice they were suffering under, in the want of attention and care which they were led to expect from this Government in carrying out the terms of union. He had made the promise, the promise was not kept, and he excused himself by saying that he had communicated to the head of the Department, who said there were reasons more or less sound—he would not say they were sound—why the promise was not kept. For my own part I expect in future a repetition of the same state of things; I expect no improvement unless the hon. gentleman is brought to a sense of his duty by language a little stronger than that which has been used to-day by my colleague from Queen's. My colleague to some extent palliated his want of diligence by saying that he was engaged in other matters. Sir, what have we to do with that? Surely his Department, which was subdivided only a year or two ago, which is swarming with employees, could find time enough to attend to a matter of this kind—to attend to the solemn promise made with one of the Provinces of the Dominion, that efficient steam communication would be kept up. That excuse will not be accepted as an excuse by me, and I am sure it will not be accepted by the constituency I represent. I complain that in this matter the present Government are doubly responsible—responsible in the sense that before they came into power they acknowledged that this service was inefficient, and in fact they denounced the *Northern Light*, which was almost a new boat, as being unfit for the service, and promised to put on a better boat. They were aware of the complaints of the manner in which that service was carried out; they promised to do better; they were aware of all the facts; they came in and instead of doing better they did worse. They have kept on the same boat year after year, when it was battered and unfit to do the work, and then they notified the captain of the boat that he was not to incur any risks at all. They have deliberately broken the contract with the island, and although I did not approve of the delegates going at the present stage of the case to lay their complaints before the Queen, still I think the people of Prince Edward Island have good cause for resorting to extreme measures in this regard, when at the end of seven or eight years since the *Northern Light* was there, we find that the promise of the leader of the Government that another boat would be sent there, is broken and no attempt is made to carry it out. My colleague from Queen's asks that the *Alert* should be put on. I say it is time another and a better boat should be built for that service. The other boat has done pretty good work, so far as she was able, but the hon. gentleman must see that a boat carrying out the arduous service in which she is engaged, of ramming against heavy masses of ice for seven or eight seasons, must become unfit for the service. I say that from beginning to end of the time this Government have been in power, they have bungled this service badly, and that there is hardly a gleam of light in the whole story from beginning to end. We have year after year made my complaint in this House; the Senators representing the island have done the same thing in the Senate; we have official answers time and again that the matter will be taken into consideration, and it all comes to nothing, and I suppose our debates here will have no effect until and unless an

election comes off, and then any number of promises will be made, and official notices sent, and all kinds of inducements held out to the people of the island to lead them to believe that this work will be done. Well, Sir, we must judge the future by the past, and I say the record of the past has been a record of inaction and delay—inexcusable inaction and delay—from beginning to end since this Government came into power.

Mr. HACKETT. I had not intended—as the motion of the hon. member for Queens had reference simply to the orders sent to the captain of the *Northern Light*—to make any remarks on this subject, but as the hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat has gone into the whole question of the terms of union between Prince Edward Island and the Dominion of Canada, I feel it to be my duty to make a few observations. This question is one of great importance to the people of Prince Edward Island. It is a question with regard to which all party feeling and all party considerations have been sunk by the people of the island. As the hon. member for Queen's (Mr. Jenkins) said in his opening remarks, the principal inducement held out to the people of Prince Edward Island at the time of Confederation, was that the Dominion of Canada would keep up continuous steam communication, winter and summer, between the island and the mainland. I will read once more that paragraph of the contract:

"Efficient steam service for the conveyance of mails and passengers to be established and maintained between the island and the Dominion winter and summer, thus placing the island in continuous communication with the Intercolonial Railway and the railway system of the Dominion."

You will see by that clause of the agreement that the Dominion Government were to place the Island Railway on, at any rate, the same basis as the Intercolonial Railway and other railways of the Dominion, thus providing continuous communication, winter and summer, between the island and the mainland. This offer was made at the time of the Confederation of the original four Provinces. Prince Edward Island was invited to co-operate, and did participate to a certain extent in the discussion at that time. Delegates from the island attended the convention at Quebec, and laid the claims of the island before that convention. Certain offers were made to those delegates; those offers were laid before the people of the island by the delegates, and rejected. The people of the island were at that time in a very prosperous condition. They had the control of their own revenue, they had no deficit, they were carrying on the affairs of the colony with a very small taxation, and they argued in this way: If we throw in our lot with the Dominion of Canada we shall lose our autonomy, and, being part of the Dominion, we shall not be able to have the same voice in the affairs of our country that we have now, and shall not be able to manage our affairs with the same economy that we do now. They therefore rejected the terms offered in 1867. The Dominion afterwards made an offer of very liberal terms. This very agreement that the Dominion would keep up communication, winter and summer, between the island and the mainland was embraced in those terms. The people of the island, although they considered that this offer was very much more favorable to them than the previous one, still rejected it, and although a number of influential gentlemen on the island were at that time advocating union, still the people rejected the offer. However, the seed had been sown, and those gentlemen in favor of union held up to the people of the Province this inducement: They said, We are isolated from the mainland during six months of the year, and we are offered, in these terms, continuous communication, if we become part of the Dominion. That great country will have the means to carry out this part of the contract, which will render great benefit to the people of this Province. After some years the people of the island came