

communication with the Island. It may possibly take the form of selecting another point for the ferry. The route may be a little longer, but it will be free from ice and capable of being traversed at every season of the year. I learn from my hon. friend from Shediac that there is such a route; but until the deficiency in the present service is established, I think the Government ought not to be pressed to go to further expense in the matter—for the present, at all events. If it be merely information that is wanted, then I do not think this House should pass a resolution calling upon the Government to issue a commission to ascertain information which it already possesses, which would not place the House in a very good position before the country.

HON. MR. POWER—The hon. gentleman will observe that the amendment does not call for a commission.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—It does not call for a commission, it is true, but the same objection I think is applicable to it; because, as I have explained, we possess the information which the amendment asks for—the motion in amendment asks us to do what we have already done, and therefore by implication asserts that we have not done it. If the information is asked for, I undertake to say, that with the greatest possible despatch it will be prepared and laid before the House. I would suggest that as no doubt the object of my hon. friends has been gained, the motion be withdrawn, and in suggesting that I give my assurance that all the information that they ask for will be furnished by the Department.

HON. MR. HOWLAN—I have listened with a good deal of attention to the debate which has taken place on this question, and I have not the most remote doubt in my mind that the hon. gentlemen who have taken part in it have spoken with perfect sincerity, and have furnished what appeared to them sound reasons for the views that they entertain. My hon. friend from Nova Scotia was the first speaker, and he asked had we taken the precaution to get all the information necessary. I would not have adverted to it but for the fact that it will be necessary for me to refer to it as we proceed further on. We took every precaution; we asked

the Government, and they kindly gave us the services of two engineers, and \$1,000 each year to make a survey across. More than that: feeling that the mode we pursued in surveying across might be insufficient, I took the trouble to write to Sir Charles Tupper to ask the Imperial Government to permit their vessel, the "Gulnare," which was there at the time, and which was better equipped than any we had, to make a survey which would be recognized as correct. There have been as many different statements made about the distance across the Straits as about the cost of the undertaking. We have been told that the route was 20, 10, 15, 18 miles, and when we had established, beyond any question of doubt, that it was only 6½ miles, the statement would have been doubted had it not been confirmed by the gentlemen who were in command of the Imperial survey there. We have done so; my hon. friend from Lunenburg will see that we took every precaution possible in making the survey. More than that: we made borings, and secured samples of the material at the bottom, so there can be no question at all regarding the distance across, or the material of which the bottom is composed. All that information has been procured. If that information is placed before a competent tribunal no doubt we will be able to get an estimate of the cost of the undertaking, and it was to get that that I have asked the Government to submit this matter to a board of competent engineers. A great deal of stress has been laid—unnecessary stress—as to the meaning of this term "efficient service." My hon. friend from Halifax asked the hon. gentleman from Murray Harbor whether the representatives of Prince-Edward Island who made the terms of Union had a tunnel in view. At the time the agreement to make the Baie Verte Canal was entered into, was there any such thought in the mind of any one as building a ship railway at Chignecto? Was there a ship railway in the world at the time? As a matter of fact, the ship railway at Chignecto is the only structure of the kind in the world to-day. I had something to do with the making of the terms of Confederation, and was one of those who came here to make the terms. The first time that the subject was mentioned informally at the Council Board in