

We have not in this Parliament that independence on the part of the members that we ought to have—that freedom from party thralls—that determination to vote on questions irrespective of what suits the interests of the particular party that is in or the leaders of the party who are out; and unless we adopt a different course, and hon. gentlemen on either side vote according to their convictions on questions that arise, then I say that Parliamentary Government in a great country like ours will prove in the end a failure, and result as it is to-day in being the Government of one man. I regret to say this, and the only remedy I can see for it is that hon. gentlemen should consider this matter. It is not long before we shall have a general election; some say it will be this year; I do not believe it myself, but it is not an improbable event; and it is time for this House to consider—the followers of the Government on the one hand, and the hon. gentlemen in Opposition on the other—whether, when they go to their constituents, they will come back again hide-bound to vote for the conclusions that their leaders may adopt irrespective of their own convictions. I take this opportunity of stating my views on this point, and I hope they will be considered by the hon. members of this House, as they certainly will be by the country.

Mr. McLELAN. The hon. gentleman says there has been no improvement made in the means of communication within the last forty years. I admit that looking back fifty years, there was no improvement in crossing from Prince Edward Island to the mainland in winter up to 1873. There was nothing but the boat service. There was no improvement nor hardly any attempt at improvement of that communication for forty or fifty years as I am informed by the records which I have examined. After the union with Prince Edward Island, the hon. member for East York (Mr. Mackenzie), then leading the Government, entered into a contract with a Mr. King for the winter service, in order to carry out the terms of the Union. That lasted for two years, but the means employed by Mr. King proved insufficient, and the hon. member for East York took other steps. He contracted with a Mr. Sewell, of Quebec, for the construction of a winter boat. Mr. Sewell had given a great deal of study to the navigation of the St. Lawrence in winter, and had prepared a model and plan of a winter steamer. He came to the Premier with his model and plan; they were submitted to scientific men acquainted with the service, who approved them, and a contract was entered into with Mr. Sewell for the construction of the *Northern Light*. The hon. member for Northumberland (Mr. Mitchell), says that great complaints were made by the press of the island when that boat entered on the service, as being a fraud on the Government. If the hon. gentleman will look at the account for repairs and additions to the *Northern Light*, he will see that she was very imperfectly constructed, and cost the late Government, in the first year or two, very large sums to supply what should have been furnished by the contractor. From \$5,000 to \$7,000 were expended in completing the engines, and very large expenditure was made to render her at all efficient. The hon. member for Queen's (Mr. Davies) says that a year or two ago she was inefficient and unseaworthy, but since then she has been taken out, examined and repaired, at an expense from \$20,000 to \$30,000, and the inspector declared she was then better than when she first entered the service, having been greatly strengthened in all respects. The hon. member for Northumberland (Mr. Mitchell), asked what is the difference between the present year and the past forty years. I say that before Confederation the island was shut off for five or six months in the year from all communication with the mainland. The committee in 1883 reported that the average term in which

Mr. MITCHELL.

there had not been steam communication had been reduced to forty-eight days. That is, we have brought down the period of interruption from five or six months to fifty days, and the same committee reported, after examining men who had lived all their lives on the shores of the gulf, and had been engaged in crossing in the boat service every year, that the construction of a boat to navigate uninterruptedly the straits the season through was an impossibility, and the hon. member for Northumberland is of the same opinion. Then the attention of the Government was turned to other methods of communication. One of the great complaints of the people of the island was that they had to travel in open sleighs to and from the capes, and that was considered worse than crossing the ice. The Government, on the report of the committee, and from the experience of the *Northern Light*, considering it as impossible to construct a ship to cross the straits at all seasons, turned their attention to improvements in other respects. They expended large sums in constructing a branch line of railway from the mainland to Cape Traverse and in constructing a wharf at Cape Traverse, and asked Parliament last year to appropriate \$130,000 to construct a pier at Cape Tormentine, and voted \$3,200 per mile to subsidise a railway from the Intercolonial Railway to Cape Tormentine, so that the Government has not been neglectful in improving the means of communication for the people of Prince Edward Island. When all these plans will be carried out, there will be no reasonable ground for complaint on the part of the people.

Motion agreed to.

It being Six o'clock, the Speaker left the Chair.

After Recess.

IN COMMITTEE—THIRD READINGS.

Bill (No. 68) to incorporate the Brockville and New York Bridge Company.—(Mr. Wood, Brockville.)

Bill (No. 2) to amend the Criminal Law, and to declare it a misdemeanor to leave unguarded and exposed holes cut in the ice on any navigable or frequented waters.—(Mr. Robertson, Hamilton.)

SECOND READINGS.

Bill (No. 112) to consolidate the borrowing powers of the Western Canada Loan and Savings Company, and to authorise the said company to issue debenture stock.—(Mr. Beatty.)

Bill (No. 113) to consolidate the borrowing powers of the Freehold Loan and Savings Company, and to authorise the said company to issue debenture stock.—(Mr. Beatty.)

THE MONTREAL BOARD OF TRADE.

Mr. CURRAN moved the second reading of Bill (No. 90) to amend and consolidate the Acts relating to the Montreal Board of Trade.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN. I made a remark to the hon. gentleman about this Bill, and particularly section 15 of it, which, I think, ought to be discussed in committee.

Mr. CURRAN. This Bill is merely a consolidation of the powers now possessed by two different bodies, that is, the Board of Trade and the Corn Exchange of Montreal. They desire to be incorporated together, so far as possible. The clause to which the Minister of Public Works refers, clause 15 of this present Bill, is a *verbatim* transcript of a similar clause to be found in the charter of the Montreal