

complied with, because if we look at the terms as cited in this resolution, we find they are "To establish and maintain efficient steam service for the conveyance of mails and passengers between the Island and the Dominion, winter and summer, thus placing the Island in continuous communication with the Intercolonial and the railway system of the Dominion." Now this steam service means steam navigation. Certainly it was not contemplated at that time to build this subway, and I think the Government has done a great deal towards improving the service across the Straits. My hon. friend says that the railway was not constructed at the expense of the Government but out of the grant given to the Island at the time of Confederation. That may be so, but my hon. friend should consider at the same time that year by year that Island Railway has had a deficit of \$60,000 or \$70,000 which the Dominion Government has had to pay. If this tunnel is to form a communication between the Island Railway and the Intercolonial Railway, then I believe that the construction of the tunnel would put a stop to the deficit and in that way would be an advantage. I will not disparage the advantage that this project may be to the Island. If it can be proved that it is not only practicable, but that the cost will not be too large, and that when built it will be durable, and not subject to destruction from any known cause, and if my hon. friend would strike out the second part of this resolution, I should support it most heartily, because I think everything practicable should be done to make the communication with the Island satisfactory. But the second part of the resolution says that we have not carried out the terms of Confederation with the Island, and I feel some difficulty about committing myself to that proposition. I hope my hon. friend will not press that portion of his resolution. I cannot support the conclusion that the terms of Confederation have not been virtually carried out—carried out in the spirit if not to the letter—carried out as far as practicable, and as far as the people of the Island at the time of Confederation contemplated they would be—carried out as far as the elements which surround the Island make it practicable to do so. A large amount of money has been expended to provide steam navigation between the

Island and the mainland. As I said before, my hon. friend has made great progress, and he should not be discouraged in his efforts. If he had approached the House in the same way that he has done now at the inception of his scheme I doubt if he would have been listened to; but he has made progress, and I hope his efforts will be crowned with success. It is in the interest not only of Prince Edward Island, but of the neighboring Provinces as well, that this tunnel should be built, if it can be constructed at a reasonable price, and can be made a permanent and durable structure. All these things should be considered in coming to a conclusion. The terms of union never contemplated anything further than to provide efficient steam navigation between the Island and the mainland. When we remember how the Island was situated before Confederation, that they had to pass between Cape Tormentine and Cape Traverse in little boats, and the mails were often interrupted for ten or twelve days at a time, we can realize the great improvement that has been effected by the Government. Although I am in favor of my hon. friend's object—that is, to get this board of engineers to ascertain whether the work is feasible or not—yet I am unwilling to vote for the second part of the resolution, which in effect says that the Government of the Dominion have not carried out the terms of union with the Island.

HON. MR. POIRIER—The resolution deals with two branches of the subject, first, the feasibility of constructing and maintaining the subway across the Straits of Northumberland, and second, any other plan which can be recommended to fulfil the terms of Confederation made with the Province of Prince Edward Island. The first part of the resolution has been thoroughly explained, and my hon. friend from Alberton deserves praise for the energy, intelligence and perseverance he has displayed in promoting this very important project. I will not deal with that question which has been so exhaustively discussed; I will only say that I fully agree with his conclusions, and if the scheme is feasible at all it should be adopted, because the difference it would make in the value of the crops and exports of the island would go far towards paying the interest on a very costly structure.