

passed, if the present company will not enter into a contract for carrying on the service more satisfactorily than for the last few years, the Government will call for tenders, and offer a sufficient subsidy to any company that will provide satisfactory boats to perform the service. I do not think that I need say a great deal more with regard to the summer route. I shall now come to the winter service, and I may say with reference to this question, that it has been discussed at some length in this House during the last four years and more. At the time when we entered the Confederation—as I have just read—it was stipulated, that continuous steam communication, winter and summer, should be maintained at the expense of the Government of the Dominion between Prince Edward Island and the mainland. Well Sir, that clause in the contract was hailed with delight by the people of Prince Edward Island. They said: "Now, we will get into a new groove; we will take a new departure; "This will mark a new era in the history of Prince Edward Island." And they accepted with great readiness the Terms of Union; but what has been the fact—so far as the winter service is concerned? There has been no change with the exception of the *Northern Light*, to which I will refer a little further on; and as has been shown, there has been no change in the summer service; everything has remained in the same state. The crossing at the Capes is performed by little boats, which are hauled across the Straits of Northumberland, a distance of nine miles. This was the system which prevailed fifty or sixty years ago. There has been no improvement. I do not censure in this relation one Government more than another. With regard to the Cape crossing before we entered the Union, the men who lived at the Capes kept up the communication for mails and passengers, in mid-winter between the Island and the mainland; and were it not for these men—and such men are not found frequently—we would be shut out altogether, at times, from communication with the mainland. These men have spent their lives at this work; they have become worn out in the service, and still we find them doing this important work, and I think that the least the Government can do, is in some way to improve this communication. My hon. friend from Queen's (Mr. Jenkins) has stated that he had an interview with the leader of the Government, with respect to this service. I may say that I accompanied him on that occasion, and owing to the very friendly and courteous manner in which we were received, and the inducements which were held out, I am very certain that before another year elapses—it is too late to do anything this season—the communication at that point will be improved. With regard to the *Northern Light* winter service, my hon. friend of the Opposition (Mr. McIntyre) stated that the *Northern Light* had fulfilled in great measure the Terms of the Union; but, I contend that she has not done so. No; there has been no fulfilment in this respect of the Terms of the Union. The hon. gentleman makes the statement that she was built expressly for this service. Nothing is farther from the truth. I have it from the gentleman who built her, the late Mr. Sewell, of Quebec, that she was intended for the navigation of the lower St. Lawrence, and not at all for the Gulf, when the late Government came and took her off his hands.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Hear, hear.

Mr. HACKETT. That is the fact. Mr. Sewell stated to me—he has since said—"He advised the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, and the Government at that time, to lengthen her twenty feet; she was too short, and not heavy enough to contend with the ice in the Gulf. She was too light and too short; she required lengthening for twenty feet; but they would not consent. They said that they were going to try her. It was a mere experiment, and in the meantime they would make a trial of the vessel." What?

Mr. HACKETT.

It was only an experiment? An experiment with the people of Prince Edward Island in the carrying out of the Terms of Union! Why, Sir, I say that no greater insult was ever offered to a free people. Why should they experiment with us? It was no experiment to cross such a body of water in mid-winter. It is well known that on the coast of Newfoundland, in their seal-fishing expeditions, they go through hundreds of miles of ice, heavier than is encountered in the Straits of Northumberland. Why, if they really wished to carry out the Terms of Union, did not the late Government bring one of the sealing vessels, which would have been suitable for the service, and put her on this route? They should not have trifled with the people of Prince Edward Island, by making any experiment at all. They should have taken the course I mention; and had they done so, we would now have some practicable service. But they did not do so. They sent down the *Northern Light*, which, as every person who knows the record of the vessel is aware, cost this country \$60,000 or \$70,000 before she reached the Island. Her first attempt was a failure—a most ignominious failure. It was supposed that she would pass through three feet of green ice; but, as my hon. friend beside me (Mr. Jenkins) has stated, she would not go through six inches of soft and one foot of heavy ice. At that time she had actually to be cut out. She has done a little better since, I am willing to admit; but I contend that she has not fulfilled the Terms of the Union with respect to steam service. On the other hand, if the late Government had not placed this steamer on that route—had they been wiser, instead of buying such a vessel as the *Northern Light*, and putting the contract in the hands of a political friend, thereby being guilty of political corruption—but had invited tenders and said: "We will invite the world to come and build a boat for this service," then the people of Prince Edward Island would have thanked them and declared that the late Government were willing to carry out the Terms of Confederation. But instead of pursuing this reasonable policy, they took a cockle-shell off the hands of a friend of theirs and used it for this service. It has now cost this country \$120,000, and it stands in the way of securing better winter communication with Prince Edward Island. Now my hon. friend from Queen's (Mr. Jenkins) has made some reference to the captain of this vessel, but her captain in 1878, as you will remember, Mr. Speaker, is the same captain who now commands her; there has been no change. I saw in the office of the Deputy Minister of Marine and Fisheries a telegram from her captain, in which he said that he had gone out from Georgetown to cross over the straits to Pictou, but after being two days out he encountered very heavy ice and was obliged to return to Georgetown. The Minister telegraphed in reply: "Use your own judgment, and cross the straits when you think you can do so." This was the order given. This captain has been in that vessel since she was placed on the route, and if he had a better ship, there is no doubt at all that he could make the crossing regularly. In the *Northern Light*, however, he has been in danger of his life, since he placed his foot in her; and he is often afraid now to cross the straits in her. We all know that, two years ago, in a letter published in the press it was stated that the *Northern Light* was the most dangerous ship afloat; and can it be fairly said that this vessel, which has been sent to the people of Prince Edward Island, is fairly carrying out the Terms of the Union. I regret very much that she was placed on the route at all, for if she had not been put there we would have had a better ship on the route before this. My hon. friend from Queen's County (Mr. Davies) is in very great dread lest the railway to Cape Traverse was not going to be completed, in connection with the Prince Edward Island Railway; and he wants to make it appear that it was merely a political dodge, on the eve of the September elec-