

between the English and the French versions. That difference, although apparently trifling, may really involve serious consequences. Some hon. gentlemen have said that we would be governed by the English version, but we cannot, I hold. The English version is capable of one of two meanings: making connection with a French port might mean making connection by a subsidiary line, as suggested by the hon. gentleman from Kennebec, or it may mean that the steamers plying between Canada and the United Kingdom are to call before or after reaching England at a French port. The hon. leader of the House, I think appeared to agree that the latter was the construction which the Government intended to put upon the Bill. I am sorry to hear it.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—The English one.

HON. MR. POWER—I understood the hon. gentleman to say that it was proposed that the steamers should first call at Milford Haven, or some port on the west of England, then go to Brest or some port in France, and then to London.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—What I said was, the intention of the Government at present was that, but that the Bill was framed in this way because the contracts have to be made between two people, and they might not be able to arrange for that being done except at too great expense.

HON. MR. POWER—As I say, the English version is capable of two constructions. The French language is an official language of Parliament as well as English. The language used in the French Bill is capable of but one construction, and that has been stated by the hon. members from Montarville and DeSalaberry. Consequently, Parliament and the Government would be bound to construe this measure as it is construed in the French version, and I think it is a matter of very considerable consequence, and that it is desirable, with a view of giving the Government liberty to do the best thing for the country, that the French version should be amended so as to correspond with the English version. I ventured to say that I thought this requiring the steamer to call at a French port was calculated

seriously to diminish the usefulness of this line. Some hon. gentlemen seemed to think, when I stated that, that I showed my ignorance of business. I am not a business man, but I do not know that it requires that one shall have a practical knowledge of business to understand the effect of a provision of that sort; and I am in this position, that supposing I know nothing whatever of business, and am incapable of understanding the provision of a Bill which relates to a business matter, still I have endorsing me, to the fullest extent, the hon. gentleman from Kennebec (Mr. Drummond). I suppose nobody in this House will venture to say that that hon. member is not a business man of the very highest intelligence and experience, and that hon. gentleman stated, only more clearly than I was able to do, the objections to having these steamers calling at a French port. I had stated, what is admitted, that these ocean greyhounds cannot carry any large quantity of freight. I understand that the "Umbria" and the "Etruria," vessels of that class, have not accommodation for more than 1,000 tons of freight. The "Parisian" and "Vancouver" have accommodation for nearly 3,000 tons. I think that is a most important matter. It is of equal consequence to this country that our products should be carried rapidly to England, and that the goods which we require from England should be carried rapidly to this country, as that the mails should be carried rapidly; I do not say that it is of more importance that the mail should be carried rapidly, but it is of just as much importance. Now, it might be said that there is an inconsistency in advocating free trade with the United States and opposing large subsidies to lines of steamers to other countries having protective tariffs, as the United States have. I do not think that is a very serious argument in favor of this Bill, because it is not proposed to pay a large sum for any mode of conveyance to the United States, and the free trade which we proposed to have with that country was to be reciprocal free trade; our products were to be admitted into the United States free of duty, and their products into our country on the same condition. If anybody can show that France is disposed to