

it was left in that condition without being repaired.

Mr. REID: Well, we will put it that way—

Mr. McKENZIE: There is no need of putting it that way; that is what I said. I did not say that they broke the wire.

Mr. REID: Do I understand the hon. member to say that this line was conveniently broken, and that it was kept in that condition for a year?

Mr. McKENZIE: I did not say that it was broken by somebody. I said that it broke at a convenient season; that it was left in that condition all through the winter; that for over a year it was not repaired, notwithstanding the fact that the cable vessel Tyrian was in the vicinity.

Mr. REID: It is hard for me to believe that any man would be capable of doing such a thing. However, the hon. gentleman has made these statements—

Mr. McKENZIE: I have made them, and I stand by them.

Mr. REID: I am not asking the hon. member to take them back. As I have said, it is difficult for me to believe that any man would do such a thing, but as the hon. member has made the statement, I would not feel justified in letting the matter rest at that. Whether I had answered the hon. gentleman's remarks or not, I would have asked the deputy minister to make inquiries and to get some explanation of the matter. Certainly if men would do a thing of that kind, I do not hesitate to say that they are not fit for the positions that they are filling.

Mr. CARVELL: They should be prosecuted.

Mr. REID: They should be prosecuted if they did anything of that kind.

Mr. McKENZIE: The minister is absolutely wrong in saying that I said that they broke the cable. I gave the minister all the data that he requires; I know what I am talking about. Let him inquire when Mr. Theriault and his wife were dismissed. They were capable officials; they were dismissed for party reasons, without the slightest justification. Let him find out, also, when the cable broke; that must be a matter of record in the department. He will find that the cable broke very shortly after the change. I do not say that these people broke the cable, but I do say that the cable broke very shortly after these two incompetent per-

[Mr. McKenzie.]

sons were appointed. For over a year the cable was left in that condition; that also must be on record in the department. The minister will find that during the time when this cable remained broken, he had these incompetent men in charge—men who could neither receive nor transmit a message. That is sufficient data for an inquiry. Let the minister investigate the matter; he will find that I am absolutely correct.

Mr. REID: I shall certainly inquire into it.

Mr. McKENZIE: Those men are still in charge.

Mr. REID: The cable was broken and no business could be done. What I cannot understand—

Mr. McKENZIE: The minister says that the cable was broken. I repeat that the cable broke; I do not know who broke it or how it broke. The breaking of the cable, however, synchronized with the appointment of these men.

Mr. LEMIEUX: During the fifteen years that I represented Magdalen islands as part of the county of Gaspé, it frequently happened that the cable broke, because it is exposed to the shifting of the ice in that section of the gulf of St. Lawrence. Possibly that was the cause of the breaking in this instance.

As to the facts, I do not know. I know that the people of the Magdalen islands were given, during the winter months, a synopsis of the news, and besides they had made arrangements with the Public Works Department through Mr. Keely, as they do most of their business with Halifax, Sydney, Pictou, and Nova Scotia generally, to wire their letters at a very low rate to the operator at Meat cove, and then the operator would mail their messages to the firms at Halifax, Sydney or Pictou, thus facilitating business with the Magdalen islands during the winter months. My hon. friend may not know it, but there is a very interesting and large population in the Magdalen islands. There are 6,000 people there, and there are some very large industries, for instance, the lobster and mackerel industries. There are some very large firms from Nova Scotia operating on the islands, and in the spring, summer and fall of the year, Americans do considerable fishing in that district. According to the Fisheries Treaty, that is one, if not the only spot in the Gulf of St. Lawrence where they can get their bait and enjoy all the privileges of our own fishermen, so that for several months in the