

the 41st rule of the House be suspended and the Bill read the second time.

Hon. Mr. HAYTHORNE — I should like to ask whether that Supply Bill contains an item for improving the means of transporting mails and passengers between Prince Edward Island and the mainland during the winter season.

Hon. Sir ALEX. CAMPBELL — It does not.

Hon. Mr. HAYTHORNE — I will just make a few remarks to impress on the minds of the Government the importance of taking hold of this question, and I hope I will be able to draw from them an assurance that another year will not be allowed to elapse before taking decisive measures for placing Prince Edward Island in a better position with regard to the mail service with the rest of the Dominion. At the present time the members of Parliament from that Province who are about to return to their homes find it impossible to determine by what route they will be able to go. We cannot tell whether we shall have to cross a strait nine miles wide in a boat not much stronger or heavier than an Indian canoe, or cross from Pictou by the *Northern Light* steamer. It has been proposed in past sessions to establish communication by way of Capes Traverse and Tormentine, but objections have been taken to the expense of this and the difficulty of obtaining right of way for the two branch lines. I am really now not speaking solely in the interest of Prince Edward Island, but in the interest of all Canada. It really is not a fact that the expenditure on this service is for the benefit of Prince Edward Island only. The mails concern the whole Dominion. What we cannot get in the way of our rights directly, we must importune for, but it is a hard thing that a province should be obliged to importune for its rights. When we came into Confederation, it was distinctly promised that there should be steam communication between the Island and the mainland at all seasons of the year. That service has been very imperfectly performed up to this time, and I hope Ministers in this House will feel themselves in a position to state that the branch railways and steam communication by way of Capes Tormentine and Traverse

will occupy their attention during the recess, and that next session they will be in a position to recommend something of the kind to Parliament.

Hon. Sir ALEX. CAMPBELL — The Government are quite sensible of the obligation which was incurred when Prince Edward Island joined the Confederation, and we did, in pursuance of the obligations which devolved on the Dominion, endeavor to maintain steam communication with that Province, and put the steamer *Northern Light* on that route. It was supposed at that time that this steamer would give complete and satisfactory communication at all seasons of the year. That it has not so resulted up to the present time the Government regret very much, and they will do everything that can reasonably be done to maintain steam communication between the Island and the mainland during the winter season, but I cannot hold out a reasonable hope that the Government will build the branch lines which the hon. gentleman referred to. Of course, there must be a limit to the expense which the Government is justified in undertaking with reference to such matters, and I am afraid that the service is not of such a character as would justify the expense of constructing these two roads, in the opinion of Parliament, but the Government will do its best to discharge its obligations, and I cannot see that they have been culpable in the past. An effort has been made to maintain the communication, and the opinion was that the construction of the *Northern Light* would furnish the best means. I will take care to bring the matter under the notice of the Minister of Public Works, and every effort that can reasonably be made to maintain the communication will be put forth.

Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY — During the months of January and February and a great part of March the mails can never be sent from Georgetown and Pictou. My impression is that the *Northern Light* is not a suitable steamer to ply between Capes Traverse and Tormentine. She draws too much water — about 18 feet. A suitable steamer, such as they have at Quebec, with small boats, could keep up the communication at the Capes, and if the branch railways were

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