

Mr. EMMERSON. I was about to say that it was very unfortunate that a resolution of this character could not be discussed from other than a petty partisan standpoint. My hon. friend from Prince (Mr. Lefurgey), who is one of the modern Jeremiahs from the island, has spoken in a complaining way as usual, setting forth the grievances which he has repeated year after year. He speaks very indefinitely with respect to the call which has been made upon the government for a number of years. He seemingly forgets the fact that Prince Edward Island entered this confederation in the early seventies, that it entered it under the government of Sir John Macdonald, that the conditions which exist to-day, existed then, and that from 1878, when Sir John Macdonald resumed the helm of state in Canada, down in 1896, the conditions of which he complains to-day existed. He points to the present Minister of Marine and Fisheries as a sinner with respect to the management of the boats. He points to the present Minister of Railways and Canals and to his predecessors since 1896 as guilty sinners, forgetting perhaps that there were Ministers of Railways and Ministers of Marine during the period between 1878 and 1896. These conditions existed then and they exist to-day. It is a problem not easy of solution. As to changing the name of the government railway system we must remember that when the Intercolonial was established under a clause of the British North America Act to connect the city of Halifax with the city of Quebec, it was given its present designation which has become so to speak historic, and I would protest in the strongest possible way against changing the name and calling it the Interprovincial Railway. It must also be borne in mind that the Prince Edward Island Railway is a narrow gauge, and that as such it can never form part of a great railway system. Whether you have a tunnel or whether you have a modern ferry service such as we have at Canso, the Prince Edward Island Railway can never be part of a great railway system while it continues to be narrow gauge, and if you had a tunnel or a transfer car service the very first thing you would have to do would be to widen the gauge of that railway. Now, there could be no improvement by transferring the present steamboat service from one department to the other because that would not in itself lessen the rates. Anyway, it would be absurd to call it a ferry service because a ferry service such as you have at Canso would mean that the cars would be taken on to the ferry at the mainland, transferred to the island, and then they would be supposed to run over the Prince Edward Island Railway, but the moment they touched the shores of the island they are met by a narrow gauge system.

My hon. friend from Pictou (Mr. Macdonald).

Mr. TAYLOR.

ald) has referred to claims against the Intercolonial Railway and he has asked that there should be a reorganization of the claims department. In my opinion no reorganization of that department will improve the conditions in favour of claimants against the railway. It must be borne in mind that claimants have always two strings to their bow, and even if you give them the widest latitude to appeal to the courts of the country, having failed to obtain there what they thought was their due, they would still turn to their representatives in parliament and political influence would be sought. If there is a reorganization of the claims department it can only be properly conducted when the Intercolonial is placed under a commission. My own experience is that where claims have been presented against the railway, after full inquiry by the claims department and after it had been determined by the Department of Justice that there was no liability, and when the Auditor General would not pay the claim even if the department were willing, notwithstanding all that a claim never dies. It rises phoenix-like from year to year and the ghost of its former self appears sometimes increased in amount and sometimes intensified in details so far as the grievance is concerned. How this difficulty in connection with a government railway could be removed I cannot see, unless it were that the railway were put under a commission. In my opinion until the Intercolonial is placed in such a position that it is not directly managed by the Crown there can be no reorganization of the claims department such as has been suggested by my hon. friend from Pictou. It has been stated that the summer service between Prince Edward Island and the mainland is under the control of a private corporation which has paid very large dividends; a corporation so strong that when a few years ago it was proposed in this parliament to have a ferry system by which the cars could be transferred, and there could be a crossing two or three times a day during the greater part of the year and during most of the winter months, that proposition was opposed by the gentlemen from Prince Edward Island. And at whose instance? At the instance of this very strong corporation which now and for the last 40 years has controlled the navigation of the straits during the summer season. They are not in a position and do not place themselves in a position to do the winter business. What is the result? The government are obliged to take these steamers, a part of the marine fleet, and pursuant to the terms of confederation utilize them for providing winter crossing. To place them under the Department of Railways and Canals will not improve the situation. It will not, in any way alter the conditions which exist to-day and which have existed for many years. There is no