

during the winter season between the Island and the main land. I explained to him the difficulties and inconveniences the Province experienced for want of means of getting off and on. These small words, "off and on," mean a great deal in the winter time in Prince Edward Island, and they meant a great deal more then than now, because much has been done to improve the communication there during the intervening years. The demand was made to keep open that communication, steam being the agent mentioned in the terms of Confederation, and accordingly attempts were made to keep navigation open by means of steam. They were found impracticable. Urging this question on the attention of this body session after session for years, I impressed upon this House the importance of improving the existing means of communication not only between Georgetown and Pictou, but by the ordinary route between the capes. This to some extent has been established, but we have also, I think, pretty well established this fact, not only by experimenting with the "Northern Light" as to what can be accomplished by steam against ice in such narrow waters as ours are, but in the more extensive Arctic voyages which have taken place in other parts of the world. The most experienced members in both Houses have, I believe, come to the conclusion that it is practically impossible to maintain permanently steam navigation in the winter season across the Straits of Northumberland. Looking at this fact, and still not willing to abandon the thing altogether, I have looked forward to such discoveries as science might make, and such improvements in the present known forces as to make this condition of confederation practicable, so that when my hon. friend opposite (Mr. Howlan) took up this question of the subway I was ready to give him every support in my power in promoting his scheme. I have watched the progress of this question as closely as a private individual perhaps can very well do, and I admit candidly that I have seen nothing as yet to convince me of the impracticability of the hon. gentleman's project. On the contrary, what I have seen of it leads me to the conclusion that the thing is practicable.

But as I said several years ago when this question was first brought forward in this House, I hailed it as an opportunity which the Government ought readily to embrace with a view to enable them to fulfil to the letter the conditions of Confederation with Prince Edward Island, and I put forward this proposition to the notice of the leader of the Government of that day, whether it was not the duty of the Government to make such inquiries into this scheme as would enable them to decide whether it was practicable or not. If it was found to be practicable it was their duty, in my opinion, to take hold of the scheme and carry it to completion and thus fulfil the terms of Confederation. My hon. friend has on various occasions placed this proposition of his before the people of Prince Edward Island, and before the public in Canada, as one which parties with whom he was acquainted were prepared to take hold of and carry out at their own expense. When this was first brought before the notice of the Senate, the leader of the Government stated in his place that the Government were not prepared to give any substantial aid in the way of money or subsidies towards its completion, and in answer to that my hon. friend has I think declared everywhere that what he wants from the Government is not substantial aid but permission to go on. If they are prepared to give him any subsidy well and good, but his company are prepared to undertake this great work themselves, on their own responsibility, and carry it out to completion, and that their payment shall depend upon the success of the undertaking when handed over as a finished work to the Government. If that be so I can see no reason why such an offer should not be accepted. A somewhat similar offer was made to complete a subway on a smaller scale under the river at Charlottetown last winter, and I think the terms were nearly the same as I have stated now. The Legislature of the Province thought fit to reject that proposition, and it has been consigned to the waste paper basket for the present. I think myself it was injudicious to do so—that it would have been a wise step on the part of the Local Legislature to have accepted that offer and made the experi-