

The Committee of Council assume that the Island Government were fully conversant with the whole action and plans of the Dominion Government towards improving the winter communication; yet the undersigned have reason to believe that the Dominion Government themselves were not fully advised of what was being done in the matter. Although a Committee of Parliament in 1883 recommended the erection of boat-houses at both Capes for the accommodation of the men engaged in the service, and for the shelter of the boats, they were not finished until the winter of this year. Sir Alexander Campbell, speaking in the Senate in 1884, said:—

“I am surprised to hear from my hon. friend opposite that the boat-houses have not been built. I called the attention of the Minister of Marine (Mr. McLellan) to the matter last Session, and he told me that the boat-houses would be provided. I shall again call his attention to that question, and to the various suggestions that have been made.”

Again, in the Parliamentary Session of 1885, Sir Alexander Campbell, speaking on the same subject, said:—

“My hon. friend from Prince Edward Island, who introduced the subject to the notice of the House, has, I think, just ground for complaint—ground for complaint, I am sorry to think, perhaps against myself, although really, as he has almost admitted, I am not responsible for the non-execution of the measures which from time to time I have been authorised by the Government to promise in this House. I remember quite distinctly the undertaking which I gave that the boat-houses should be constructed, one on each side of the ferry. I made that promise with the authority of the then Minister of Marine and Fisheries, and, as is my constant practice, the very day the promise was made, I wrote to the Minister of Marine and Fisheries that, pursuant to what he had told me, I made the promise, and that I hoped he would keep it in mind. I afterwards called attention to it, and there were reasons which were more or less sound—I can hardly say sound—which made the delay more or less excusable. It was thought for a time that the orders had been given, and that the boat-houses were in course of construction.”

The Dominion Government have totally neglected, ever since Confederation, to make any provision whatever for the transport of passengers when compelled to resort to the Capes route. While the contract with the ice-couriers stipulated for the carriage of mails, no arrangements were made for passengers, who were forced to effect the crossing as best they could, although the terms of Union require like provision to be made for passengers as for mails. The undersigned would remark that the benefits conferred by the Branch Railway to Cape Traverse are very questionable when it is understood that, after landing passengers at that point, the Government made no arrangements for carrying them across the Straits.

Nearly 13 years have elapsed since the Island became a member of the Confederation, and all that has been accomplished in the fulfilment of the guarantee to provide continuous communication has been the purchase, for the Georgetown-Pictou route, of a steamer, which, during the last five years, has been laid up an average of 70 *days* each winter, and the completion, on the Capes route, of a branch railroad 12 miles in length, only a small part of the distance intervening between the Island Railway and the Inter-Colonial Railway. Even the promises made by a Minister of the Crown (Sir Alexander Campbell) have received only tardy fulfilment, and his assurance that a steamer should be employed to assist the “Northern Light” has never been carried out.

Referring to the Report of the Committee of Parliament in the Session of 1883 to investigate the question of steam communication with the Island, the Committee of Council say that, after long and careful consideration of the subject, and the examination of persons, papers, and records, the Parliamentary Committee reported, on the 18th April 1883, in the following words:—

“It is the unanimous opinion of the Members of Committee, confirmed by the testimony of witnesses of large practical experience, that no steamships can be built capable of keeping up continuous communication in midwinter.”

The undersigned have examined the Report of the said Parliamentary Committee, and have failed to discover therein that they came to this conclusion.

The Island Legislature, in their Memorial to Her Majesty, having instanced the anxiety of the Dominion to fulfil its obligations to British Columbia, by the construction, at an enormous cost, of the Canadian Pacific Railway, as contrasted with the apathy and neglect exhibited in carrying out its pledged faith with Prince Edward