

ward Island and the mainland, to undertake that work themselves. However, the Government declined any such responsibility and the scheme has hung fire from that time to this. In the meantime, we have had a select committee of the House of Commons, and I date the progress that has been made in the matter of communication between Prince Edward Island and the mainland from the sittings and the report of that committee. The hon. gentleman from Alberton himself, the hon. gentleman who has recently taken a seat in the Senate, the present Governor of Prince Edward Island and myself, were called as witnesses before that committee. I put in a written memorial, and I am glad to say I can look back upon that memorial to-day with great satisfaction, because I see that the substance of it and of the evidence given by those gentlemen before that committee has been to a certain extent followed out by the Government, and, consequently, whatever little success has attended their efforts has been since they changed their course altogether, and instead of snubbing members of Parliament when they got up in this House or elsewhere to advocate the interests of their Province, they began to see that the members were right and the Government were wrong. I recollect there was a struggle for a considerable time to obtain a moderate concession while our only means of getting across the Straits in winter was by ice boats. It was only by a great and strong effort that we at last induced the Government, after the sitting of the committee, to build at each side of the Straits a boat house, in order that the craft we had to cross in should be water-tight and fit for the service they had to perform. Before that it was utterly impossible on the open bord ice to so patch up a damaged boat that she was fit for the service when next called on. This was one of the results of the Government changing their course and adopting the advice of competent experts and members of Parliament of both Houses. I think, further, that if they would pursue that course the probability is that they would meet with still further success. I look upon the "Stanley" as the result of advice given to the Government by various members of that committee. A competent person was sent to the north of Europe and to Scotland, and in a marvellously short time that vessel, whose services we so

highly appreciate now, the "Stanley," was across the Atlantic ready to enter on her winter service here. Although it cannot be said that she is capable of performing it under all circumstances, yet she is an exceedingly useful and valuable vessel to our Province. With reference to the course the hon. gentleman has taken this evening with regard to calling on this House to recommend a certain piece of advice on the Government, I must point to this fact, that the idea originally contemplated by those who framed the conditions of Confederation was steam communication on the water and not steam communication under the sea. That is one very great difference. It is true we were glad to discuss and to consider the project of a subway or tunnel when we were almost hopeless with regard to getting across the Straits of Northumberland in the winter by means of steam, but I think the prospects of steam communication on the water are rather improving, while the subject of the subways and tunnels is still rather, I may say, very uncertain. I would prefer hon. gentlemen who desire to appreciate what the real difficulties of this project are to get out of the library a book called the "History of the Severn Tunnel." Now, that great river is very similar to the Bay of Fundy. The tides are exceeding high there, and run with great force and violence at times, and in order to carry on communication between the mining districts of Wales and the manufacturing districts of England it was necessary to carry the Great Western line of railway into Wales by a more direct course than they had been up to that time able to secure. Before the tunnel was constructed the ordinary way of connecting the English lines with the districts in Wales was by going round the head of the Severn, but that was a circuitous route, and caused a great deal of delay. With the energy which has characterized railway enterprise during the last few years it was natural that some such scheme as a tunnel should be formulated, and it was. It was commenced, I think, somewhere about 1870, but I am free to acknowledge that the first contract which was let for the purpose of building the tunnel was a complete failure. The water got in and completely filled the works, and the contractor was broken and obliged to abandon his contract. It remained in a hopeless state for several years, until the pressure of the times compelling