

tion for the crews, but proper water boats to enable the passage to be made when there is a mile or two of open water and the wind is blowing hard. The passage has to be made in these little ice boats, and luggage is frequently damaged by the water and sometimes the lives of the passengers placed in jeopardy. I believe that the contractors offered to put on two better boats, and man them with a proper crew, in order that the passengers might not be detained, as they are, and have been during the past winter, as well as during the present winter. This detention has lasted sometimes for a week, or ten days at a time. The Government have acted foolishly in entrusting this matter to the Postmaster of Charlottetown. I do not want to make any positive charge against this person, for I am not aware what his instructions are, but somebody is very much to blame for haggling about a couple of hundred dollars which ought to be paid in order to secure these necessary water boats and sheds. When I came over with four or five others, we had to wait for four or five days at the Cape, simply because there was no water boat to take us across a mile of water. This ought not to be. From eighteen to twenty ladies and gentlemen, including commercial travellers, who were, for many reasons, very desirous of crossing, were delayed, when I was there, simply because the party who is authorized to deal with this matter, would not take the responsibility of spending a few hundred dollars to remedy the present state of affairs. I ask the hon. Minister who has this matter specially in charge that he will see that proper sheds are built on both sides for the purpose of protection, and that sleeping apartments are provided for the men. A hardier and better class of men cannot be found anywhere; they are trained to the service, and only trained men can perform the service. The work cannot be done by ordinary men, for it requires that they should be as agile as cats or chamois goats, so that they may be able to spring from one cake of ice to another. These men come from miles around and are are totally destitute of shelter, so far as the Government are concerned, and they have to sleep where they can in the farmers' houses. This protection should be afforded without delay, because whether the Government put on a new steamboat, or two new steamboats to take the place of the *Northern Light*, there always will be a period of four or five and sometimes six weeks during the winter months when people must cross by the Cape. In the year 1880 the Minister of Railways addressed this House at some length on the subject of the *Northern Light*. He acknowledged our grievance and promised to provide the remedy. He said:

"The subject has remained in abeyance until the further experiment be tried of how far steam communication between the capes can be established for mail service. The mails are now carried between the capes by ice boats; but I am in hopes it will be found that either the *Northern Light* or a boat more specially constructed for that service will be able to maintain regular communication, or decidedly improve it, by making it less trying to passengers than by the ice boat system. It is incumbent upon the Government to carry out, as far as possible, the obligation of steam communications between the Island and the rest of the Dominion; and, no doubt, although a very large expenditure is involved in the proposed wharves at the capes, I believe it can be greatly reduced by getting a boat of lighter draught."

The hon. gentleman made this statement frankly and fully, and I hope he will now carry out his promise. At other times the hon. Minister has acknowledged that this subject was one which required attention at the hands of the Government, but the matter has gone on from year to year without action being taken, until the patience of those who are interested is almost exhausted. The *Northern Light* has done good service in the past but she can be greatly improved upon, and besides the boat is almost worn out. The Minister of Marine and Fisheries will not say I am mistaken when I state that though she was repaired last summer she was not subjected to Lloyd's inspection. It was not expected when the boat was built that it would last more than eight years, and it has now performed the service for about that time. Under the fiscal policy of the present Government we are com-

Mr. DAVIES.

pelled to buy our goods from Canada instead of from England, where we could purchase them cheaper. At the present time the warehouses of Picton are filled with goods awaiting transportation to the Island, but the *Northern Light* is not adapted to the carriage of freight. I am informed, and it is currently reported in the Island, that the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, or some one in his Department instructed his agent in Prince Edward Island, or the captain of the boat, not to allow her to run this winter unless he was perfectly certain that no possible danger could be incurred. I do not say this statement is true; in fact I hope it will be contradicted, but it is said that the captain was informed that if he went out he would go at his own personal risk. If these instructions were sent the whole service will become a farce, for the boat never could go into the ice without great risk. But though the boat is worn out and will not be able to last more than another season she has done good service in the past, and the experience of her officers has been such as will enable them to give useful hints to the Government for the construction of a new boat. Year by year the quantity of produce to be shipped, and the number of passengers to be carried, are increasing, and I do not think we are asking too much in demanding that the Government should put on two boats instead of the *Northern Light*, as they would be pretty well occupied with freight all through the winter months. It seems to me that this demand is a reasonable one, even if we had not a contract with the Dominion at all. But when they solemnly entered into this contract, we are entitled to ask that it shall be faithfully kept. I do not think there is one hon. member from the Island who will say that this matter is one that should be referred to a Commission. There is nothing to enquire about; the facts are all well known to the Minister of Railways and the Minister of Marine and Fisheries—just as well known as they could be after months of enquiry. The captain and engineer of the boat can give the Government all the information they require as to improvements which might be made in the new vessels. No delay should be incurred in making that service—to use the words of the compact—efficient, and in giving us continuous communication with the mainland. The mass of the people are willing to be taxed for the construction of great public works in other parts of the Dominion, and all they ask in return is that the compact made with them, that they should have continuous steam communication connecting them with the railways of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, shall be carried out. I make this motion as no mere matter of form; I make it because the people from one end of the Island to the other are agitating this question with the greatest possible earnestness. I believe that the faith which a large number of the people of the Island have expressed in the present Government—a faith which I never profess to have had myself—that they could carry out the Terms of the Union, and their belief in the promises which leading members of the Administration have made from time to time will be seriously shaken, unless some active measures are at once taken by hon. gentlemen opposite to carry out these terms and to fulfil these promises.

Mr. YEO. I am pleased that this question has again been brought up in this House. I had hoped from the action of the Government last summer, about the time of the elections, that the matter would have been attended to before now. It has been before the House for nearly eight years, but it seems as if it were no nearer settlement than ever. I hope the Government who have again been returned with a large majority—a fact which I, for one, greatly regret—will take up the question at once and deal fairly with the people of Prince Edward Island. I would just like to see some of the Ministers undergo the experience that we have undergone, who have had to cross the strait once or twice a year, for if they had that experience I believe they would