

I thought it was four years—upon a distinct issue between the House and Hon. Mr. Howe arising out of the education question.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Not at all.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. I will accept the hon. gentleman's statement of his recollection as to what took place.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. The question was not raised at all.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. It is only a short time ago since I refreshed my memory on these points, and I think I am correct in saying that the issue before the people then had no more to do with the constitutional point the hon. gentleman has stated than the issue when Mr. Murray was returned. I do not intend to go into the general question, which was threshed out last year; but the leader of the Opposition will find in regard to the appointments, that nearly all the list has been disposed of, except perhaps one or two more cases on which action has not been taken.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. My hon. friend has spoken of a subject on which he does not profess to have any special knowledge—that of the conduct of the Lieutenant-Governor, and I am sorry he mentioned his name, as I did not do so, and he is not living; but the issue was so live an issue that I presented petitions signed by a majority of the electors of the province of Nova Scotia demanding, and it was kept a live issue down to the time of the elections.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. That was not the issue on which the hon. gentleman went to the people.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. It was one of them.

Motion agreed to.

SOUTHPORT, BELFAST AND MURRAY HARBOUR PROPOSED RAILWAY.

Mr. MARTIN moved for:

Copies of all correspondence, petitions, resolutions and other papers in possession of the Government relating to the proposed branch railway from Southport to Belfast and Murray Harbour, and other proposed railway branches in the province of Prince Edward Island.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I wish to offer a few remarks on the subject-matter of this motion. Early last session, I put a similar motion on the Order paper, but the debate on that motion was adjourned, and it was not again reached before prorogation. Last session I also asked from the Minister of Railways and Canals the following statement:—

A statement showing the amount of money contributed by the Government towards the building

and subsidizing of railways in Canada since the first of July, 1873; the number of acres of land given as subsidies to railways in Canada since that time, with the estimated cost and price of such land; and also a statement showing the proportion of such expenditure made in each of the provinces separately, including the Northwest Territories; deducting therefrom, for each province, any sums that may have been charged back against the province on account of such railway expenditure in their debt account with the Dominion.

I regret that the Minister of Railways and Canals has not yet brought down that return, because if we had it now it would be of great service to us in discussing this question which so intimately concerns the province of Prince Edward Island. Some hon. members may be aware that this matter has been discussed in this House for some years. Prince Edward Island has a grievance in that respect since confederation, and especially since 1883, when a departure was made from the compact with reference to subsidies to railways, which was arrived at when we came into the union. Since 1883, railways have been built by the Dominion Government, and others assisted by giving subsidies though not extending beyond our province, and that I presume was in order to relieve the provinces of the burden of paying for railways within their borders. The provinces were unequal to the task, and the Dominion Government came to their rescue and extended the system of granting subsidies to railways in the different provinces of the Dominion. That system has never been applied to Prince Edward Island, notwithstanding the fact that the province is badly in need of railway expenditure. The branch lines with reference to which I have given notice of motion, was contemplated before we entered confederation and in fact, in the 211 miles of railway which were under contract or in operation at the time of the union, it was proposed that these branches should be built, and especially this branch to the south. I doubt if the Railway Bill would have been passed in the provincial legislature unless it had been agreed to, that these branch lines should be constructed. I would remind the House that in 1896 the late Government brought down a project which included the building of this railway from Southport to Belfast and Murray Harbour. The carrying out of that project would render long-delayed justice to Prince Edward Island, and I trust that the present Government will carry it into effect. I may say, that in 1896 the proposal was endorsed by the then Opposition who now control the affairs of this country. The basis on which this claim was made was agreed to in 1888, when a demand was made by Prince Edward Island for the fulfilment of the compact of confederation. A delegation was sent up here, and a sub-committee of the Dominion Privy Council made a report, from