

various governments were always directed towards making that promise good, but for some years they were unable to do so. Proof of that can be found in the fact that in the year 1902 the Federal Government allowed Prince Edward Island an increase of \$30,000 a year in her subsidy as a recompense for their failure—and the failure of preceding governments up to that date—to implement the agreement that was made at Confederation. Now, Sir, that condition went on and various ideas in connection with the matter were advanced until 1912, when the Government of that day adopted the policy of establishing a car ferry service between the nearest point on Prince Edward Island and the mainland. Up to that time our communication was kept up in winter by icebreakers on two routes, namely, from Pictou to Charlottetown and from Pictou to Georgetown. In midwinter they both converged on the one route between Pictou and Georgetown. In the summer time we had two boats which kept up a dual service, one from Charlottetown to Pictou and the other from Summerside to Point du Chêne. The committee will therefore see that we had during those years four boats at our disposal to keep open our channels of communication; but we were then fighting the ice in various parts of the straits where, up to that time, it was impossible for human invention to keep open continuous communication. In 1912, as the Minister of Railways well knows, it was decided to adopt a different system, and I commend the Government for the decision they arrived at that time because it has meant a good deal to the province of Prince Edward Island—or rather it will mean a good deal when the whole scheme is put into effect. After that decision was arrived at tenders were let for the car ferry, as was referred to by my hon. friend from King's earlier this evening. That ferry, of seven thousand horse-power, was built at considerable cost and placed on the route in the year 1916. At that time the war was on and a Macedonian cry was sent out by Russia for icebreakers. The two ice-breakers we had were sold to the Russian Government for a certain price, and the other boats were allowed to be sold as well, so that where we used to depend on four boats we now have only one available to carry us through the ice conditions in winter time. These conditions are very hazardous for any boat and it is never known at what time an accident may occur. If an accident should take place under present conditions I want to tell the

[Mr. Sinclair.]

minister that the whole transportation of the province of Prince Edward Island would be placed in jeopardy. Our communication would be cut off, and it would be a disastrous thing to our business men and our producers, the farmers and the fishermen. Our exports have very largely increased during the last few years owing to the enhanced prices which were paid for our products, and other causes that have proved a stimulus to our people. Now, I want to impress upon the minister the necessity of placing in the Estimates at the earliest possible moment an amount sufficient to provide a second icebreaker for maintaining connection between Prince Edward Island and the mainland. When that system of transportation was embarked upon by the Government it was not merely with the idea of getting communication between the province and the mainland; a much broader principle was contemplated than that. We had on the island previous to that time a narrow gauge railway. The car ferry was built; she was equipped with standard gauge rails so as to convey standard gauge cars. That made it necessary, Sir, in order to get the full benefit of the means of communication thus provided, that we should have a standard gauge railway on the island. The Government have undertaken the standardization of the railway, and have continued the work, and though some of our people were rather inclined to think it might have been pushed along a little faster than it was I am not going to complain on that score. When the car ferry was placed in operation the work of standardizing the road was undertaken. It was begun in the year 1913 when long ties were being laid in place of short ties to allow for the spreading of the rails. That work was continued up to last year; on the section of the road between Charlottetown and Summerside and down to Borden a distance of some sixty miles has been standardized by the laying of a third rail, permitting the use of both narrow and broad gauge cars. The operation of these two systems makes very difficult the work of the management and the officials of the road. The point I wish to emphasize is this: in his statement made on the 30th March last the minister said that the Government had decided to go no further at the present time with the standardization of the gauge of the Prince Edward Island railway. He said that there was a deficit on the Intercolonial and that the Prince Edward Island railway contributed its