

**Hon. Mr. LANGEVIN** said the Government had acted upon previous information. Certainly, of the two routes, that they had selected was best for a ship canal. It was best, also, for a smaller canal. There would be no objection whatever in furnishing the papers now asked for.

The motion was carried.

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#### OBSTRUCTION OF NIAGARA RIVER

**Mr. CHARLTON** moved for any correspondence which may have taken place between the Government and the Common Council of the city of Buffalo, relating to the obstruction of the navigation of Niagara River by the erection of a crib in the mid-channel of the said stream for the Buffalo city waterworks.

He observed that his object in making the motion was to bring the attention of the Government to the fact that the navigation of Niagara River was likely to be seriously obstructed by the erection of this crib. The river at this point was narrow, and a short distance below it the International bridge was being erected, and it and the crib would form a very serious obstacle to navigation, especially as far as lumber rafts were concerned. The timber trade passing down the river was of great and growing importance. A large amount of square timber was now being shipped in rafts from Michigan, and the trade was likely to extend to the Canadian shores of the Georgian Bay.

If this crib were allowed to be constructed it would entail great expense upon owners of rafts, compelling them to take the rafts apart and float the lumber down in small tugs. It would be a serious obstruction to navigation, and ought not to be allowed to be placed there without a protest.

The motion was carried.

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#### REPORT FROM THE SENATE

**The SPEAKER** read a message from the Senate announcing the names of the Senate portion of the joint Committee on Printing.

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#### PRINCE EDWARD'S ISLAND

The orders of the day being called,

**Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE** asked the leader of the Government if it was his intention to lay before the House any information concerning the recent negotiations with Prince Edward's Island. He was astonished to find in newspapers of that Province as well as in other eastern newspapers a statement showing that negotiations had taken place between the two Governments. These statements also represented that certain offers had been made to the Government of

Prince Edward's Island, on condition of their entering Confederation.

It did seem to him very extraordinary that while the Parliament was sitting such important documents should be withheld from the House and communicated to the public newspapers. He desired to ask if the published statements were authentic and why the information had not been communicated to this House.

**Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD** said the inquiry was a very natural one. The Government of the Island of Prince Edward has sent two of their members to Ottawa, and they have had negotiations with the Government here on the Union of Prince Edward's Island with the Dominion.

Certain conditional arrangements were entered into and these gentlemen went home for the purpose of submitting them to their colleagues, and they in turn had made up their minds to submit them to the people before they would be laid before the Legislature. These terms would therefore be laid before that body after the elections, and it was obviously a matter of importance to that Government that they should choose their own time and their own mode of submitting the propositions of the Dominion Government to their people; therefore he did not deem it advisable to place these provisional returns before the Parliament here until the Government had ascertained that they had been presented to the public of Prince Edward's Island.

Of course the Government of Prince Edward's Island had the great task of submitting the question to the people and going to the country upon it, and he thought it might be thwarting greatly the object they all had in view if there were a premature publication. It was a matter of little consequence whether one or the other party published these terms first. He expected information from the Government of Prince Edward's Island in a short time, and after his Government had received that, they would be in a position, without injury to the great cause of union, to submit the papers to this House.

**Mr. MILLS** said it would be contrary to law for the Government to initiate such a measure. That motion belongs to Parliament and not to the Government.

**Hon. Mr. ANGLIN** said the people of Prince Edward's Island might receive a very improper impression from the report of the speech of the leader of the Government. The newspapers of Prince Edward's Island published the proposed terms, and the Government had gone to the country upon these terms. If the people of Prince Edward's Island heard that the Minister of Justice thought it might possibly damage the cause of Confederation in that Province by announcing to the House whether their public statement were correct or incorrect, they might suppose there was some doubt as to their correctness.

**Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD** said he had not even seen the statements in the newspapers. All he knew was that provisional arrangement had been entered into by the gentlemen from Prince

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Edward's Island, who had left here for the purpose of submitting it to their colleagues and afterwards, if they thought proper, to the people. Of course it would be open to Parliament afterwards to decide whether or not these terms should be accepted.

**Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE** said the hon. gentleman could see statements in the newspapers, and he could compare them with the actual facts, and if they were correct, or nearly correct, it would be quite evident they had been communicated and published in Prince Edward's Island by Government.

The moment it was made manifest that there was any official communication, the papers should be laid before the House, accompanied with any documents necessary to enable the House to understand the position taken by the Government. Of course it was quite true, as the member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills) had said, the Government had no right to make any arrangements, but he did not object to the Government endeavouring to enter upon such negotiations as might result in the Union of the remaining provinces still outside the Dominion; and anything that might promote that object would receive the assistance on his side of the House; but he did think it was not treating Parliament with respect due to it, to have such documents as that reach them from such address during the session, and then, when the attention of the Government had been called to it to tell them that as soon as official communications were made with Prince Edward's Island, the Government would place the information before the House. He did not think it was the way to carry on business in relation to such matters.

The terms, of course, would have to receive the consent of the House, and in order that that might be done, the papers should be laid before them on the earliest possible occasion, so that they might judge as to the propriety or impropriety of the course of action proposed.

**Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD** said he differed from the hon. gentleman. In his view they ought to act upon the newspaper. The statements appeared in the newspapers where members could see them.

**Mr. MILLS:** These statements may be incorrect.

**Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD** differed from the hon. gentleman's idea that they should act upon newspaper items. The statement might not be correct, and, if incorrect, it would be very improper of the Government to lay the papers before the House until they had received official communication from Prince Edward Island. No unauthenticated documents should be acted upon. The Government of the Island desired that they should have an opportunity of submitting their provisional case in their own way to their own people, before it was brought up in the Dominion Parliament. The House would have every opportunity of considering the resolutions, should there be a necessity to concur in or reject them.

**Mr. MILLS** said the Government had no right by law to take the initiative in this matter. They did not stand in the same position with regard to the question of the union of the outlying Provinces as they did with regard to a matter of administrative policy.

There was nothing in the Act to justify the Government in taking the initiative any more than any other member of the House, and there was this very strong objection to the course pursued by the Government, and it was the objection made against their course with regard to British Columbia, namely: that while the people and Legislature of Prince Edward's Island were free to discuss the matter and make amendments to the terms, the members of this House would be obliged by the policy of the Government to either accept or reject the terms as a whole. As this House was one of the primary parties to any negotiations relating to Union, it was only proper that they should decide upon the terms before proposing to Prince Edward's Island.

There were only two parties in the matter, namely, the Legislature of Prince Edward Island and the Parliament of the Dominion. There was no third party. The Executive have not any authority in the Confederation Act for bringing about the union of outlying Provinces. Any proposition from the Government could only be from them as the agents and servants of Parliament, and should have received the sanction of Parliament before the Government took any action in the matter at all.

He cited the 116th section of the Confederation Act in support of this view. He held that under this section the Government should have consulted Parliament, and obtained its approval to the proposal they wished, as agents of Parliament, to submit to the Legislature of Prince Edward's Island.

**Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD** said that the hon. gentleman must not have understood the British constitution properly, else he would have seen that the responsibility of initiating negotiations rested upon the Government of the day.

The matter then dropped.

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#### COLLECTING DEBTS FROM VESSELS

On motion of **Mr. KIRKPATRICK** the House received the report of the Committee of the Whole on the resolution declaring it expedient to make further provision for the collection of demands against vessels navigating certain lakes and inland waters of Canada. He then introduced a Bill founded on the resolution.

**Hon. Mr. HOLTON** called attention to the fact that the Bill was old. The printed copy of the last Session was merely waste paper, and, therefore, entirely irregular.

After some conversation, the Bill was read a first time.

The House then adjourned at 5.30 p.m.