

maintain their proficiency, and after making exertions and going out to vessels entering, their services might be declined, and their trouble would be in vain, for though vessels not desiring a pilot were required to display a flag at five miles distance, yet that signal could not very well be discerned in case of a storm. His own judgment had gone a long way with the hon member for Richmond last year, but his views were changed to a great extent by facts which had come to his knowledge since.

Mr. DONALD FRASER, in reply to Mr Miller, said he had been informed by an old pilot that there had been no instance known of a vessel being lost while in charge of a pilot in entering or leaving the port of Pictou. There was a great difference between Pictou and other harbours, because at that place the pilots were obliged to keep up superior and more expensive kinds of boats.

Hon. PROV. SEC. said that the existing regulations seemed to place Pictou in a different position from other ports. The question, whether the effect of such legislation was to interfere with the security of property, was a very serious one. So hard was the operation of the present law that many of the pilots had sold their boats and engaged in piloting vessels to and from the Strait of Canso, leaving the duties to be discharged in a manner not so efficient as the shipping interest required. If these were the facts, some steps should be taken either by alteration or repeal of the existing regulations.

Mr. MILLER denied the accuracy of the statement that existing legislation placed the port of Pictou in different circumstances from those of any other port. If the proposed alteration were merely to the effect that the pilotage should be raised, that might be a matter worthy of consideration.

Mr D FRASER obtained leave to bring in a Bill, in accordance with the prayer of the petition.

PETITIONS.

Mr HILL presented a petition from the Post Master of Hantsport asking for an increase of salary.

Mr S McDONNELL presented a petition for the Post Master of Mabou asking for an increase of salary.

Also, a petition for the establishment of a Money Order Office at Mabou.

Also, a petition with 435 signatures on the subject of Confederation.

CONFEDERATION.

Mr. ANNAND wished to ask a question of the government in connection with the subject before the House. He had seen a paragraph in the organ of the government, the *Colonist*, which he thought required an explanation.—The paragraph alluded to a certain meeting recently held at Cornwall, known to be represented by John Sandfield Macdonald, a late Premier of Canada; without further preface, he would read the following curious statement from the paper referred to:—

“FROM CANADA.—*Cornwall, Canada, March 2.*—At a public demonstration and dinner to the members of the Government last night, speeches were made by Galt, Howland, Macdonald and Cartier. Macdonald asserted that the Confederation of the Provinces was now certain to take place in a few weeks.”

He would attach very little importance to this declaration if it did not come from a source like that of the Attorney General West of Canada, and had not been republished by the organ of the government of Nova Scotia. It was a matter of very serious import to the people of this province when they learned from such authority that their rights and privileges were to be swept away without their being consulted. It was time, he thought, to ask the government whether they had any information on the subject which might give the House and country to understand what was meant by the significant remarks of the Canadian statesman. He would also like to know whether the government were prepared to state if Confederation was to take place without consulting the House or without being referred to the people of this country.

Hon PROV SEC'y said that now he had no difficulty in believing that there was no precedent—no ordinary rules that could be expected to measure the scope of the ingenuity of the hon gentleman who had just addressed the House. He thought it rather a curious course for him to ask for an explanation of speeches made at a public dinner in another province.—The hon gentleman must certainly be attempting a joke at the expense of the administration when he propounded such a question, and asked them to give an explicit answer. He (Dr T) could certainly say that he had no information that enabled him to state upon what data Mr Macdonald made such statements as those referred to. He had certainly read these statements with just as much surprise as had the hon member himself. As respects the position of the question of Confederation, it was almost unnecessary to say much to the House. As every gentleman was aware, it had not at any time been brought forward as a Government measure. Inasmuch as the Government had obtained the services and co-operation of leading gentlemen of the Opposition, they could not bring forward the subject in a party aspect. Gentlemen who had held responsible positions in connection with the party opposed to that now in power were invited to give their assistance to the Government in relation to this great question. It was therefore impossible to present the question except as one in which both members of the Government and gentlemen connected with the Opposition took a deep interest. In that condition the question had been brought down to the House to be considered and dealt with in such a manner as it should direct. Before the question was brought up during the session of 1865, circumstances transpired in the neighboring Province which gave a new aspect to matters.

The Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick, in the exercise of his judgment, dissolved the Legislature, and the result was that an overwhelming number of the gentlemen who were returned declared themselves hostile to the proposed scheme of Union arranged at Quebec. That having taken place, the House would at once see that the Government of this Province and the gentlemen interested in the question found themselves placed in an entirely altered position. He had no hesitation in saying that whilst he believed that the scheme of Union as devised at Quebec was of vast and vital importance to British North America—and to no portion of it more than to Nova Scotia—yet, under