

STEAM COMMUNICATION WITH PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.

Mr. A. MARTIN. Before the Orders of the Day are called I would like to ask the Minister of Marine if the steamers have succeeded in renewing communication with Prince Edward Island? What was the last trip the steamers made?

Hon. RAYMOND PREFONTAINE (Minister of Marine and Fisheries). I am not informed that the ferry has been resumed. I understand the last trip was made a fortnight or three weeks ago.

Mr. A. MARTIN. That is very indefinite. Is it not four weeks?

Mr. PREFONTAINE. I have not the exact date.

Mr. A. MARTIN. Has communication been renewed or is it still at a standstill?

Mr. PREFONTAINE. Communication has not been renewed.

QUESTIONS RE TRANSCONTINENTAL CONSTRUCTION COMMISSION.

Mr. E. D. MONK (Jacques Cartier). Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day are called, I would like to ask the government if questions concerning the doings of the Transcontinental Railway Construction Commission can be answered and information can be obtained in regard to those questions, when they are asked in the usual form. I am tempted to seek this information because, on the 20th February instant, I put the following question:

1. Did the government, during the months of October and November, 1904, employ civil engineers to make a survey for a line of railway in the county of Joliette, Quebec?

2. For what object was this work and survey undertaken by said engineers, and was this work and survey undertaken in connection with the proposed Transcontinental Railway?

3. What was the total cost of this work and survey already accomplished by said engineers and their assistants?

4. Have said engineers made their report concerning this work and survey? If so, what was the date of said report?

5. Who was the overseer charged with the direction of this work, and what salary did he receive?

This question was answered in the following form:

Hon. H. R. EMMERSON (Minister of Railways and Canals). The government did not during the months of October and November employ civil engineers to make a survey for a line of railway in the county of Joliette, but I have reason to assume that the Transcontinental Railway Commissioners made a survey through that county, not under the direction of the government.

The point to which I wish to draw the attention of the government is that it seems to me that the Transcontinental

Mr. FOSTER.

Construction Commission, is so to speak, a department of the government. I believe that under the rules, questions can be put in this House to the government, to the ministers and to individual members. This last form is seldom adopted. Most of these questions in fact can only be answered by information sought in the different departments, sometimes far from Ottawa. That information is obtained from officials of the government at some remote places. It seems to me that a question put in this form is pertinent and should have been answered on the principle that this commission is really a servant of the government. The practical object of my question is to know in what form, according to the rules, questions must be put. If they are put in the form suggested to me by the government, will questions be answered or is the Transcontinental Railway Commission a body independent of this House?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. The answer to my hon. friend (Mr. Monk) is to be found in a motion of which my hon. friend has himself given notice, asking all information with regard to these surveys. When the motion is reached, I have no doubt it will be carried, but it will have to be amended, because the information has to be obtained from the Transcontinental Railway Commission, and not from the government.

Mr. MONK. Perhaps my right hon. friend will allow me to say that that is not the information which I sought by my question. The information sought by the question I put was simply in relation to the fact. In the motion I asked for a copy of the report, detailed accounts of expenses and the names of the parties employed. The question I put had reference to a department of the government, and I think should have been answered in the form in which it was put.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. If my hon. friend wants the information, he will have to make a motion. We have not the information in our hands, but shall have to obtain it from the commission itself.

THE CAPITAL OF SASKATCHEWAN.

Mr. J. H. LAMONT (Saskatchewan). Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day are called, I wish to ask the Prime Minister if the Bill providing for the creation of the province of Saskatchewan fixes the permanent capital at Regina, as stated in one of the evening papers yesterday?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. No. It is provisional only, and subject to the will and the determination of the legislature.

RAILWAY ACT AMENDMENT.

House in committee on Bill (No. 36) to amend the Railway Act, 1903.—Mr. Fitzpatrick.