

Mr. S. CAMPBELL asked the government whether it was the intention to lay the report of the Adjutant General of Militia upon the table this session.

Hon. PROV. SEC. replied that it would be submitted as soon as ready.

The following bills were read a third time:— To enlarge the powers of the trustees and governors of Acadia college; To amend chap. 115 R. S. concerning the descent of Real & Personal Property; To change the names of certain places in the county of Lunenburg. To incorporate Waverly Gold Mining Company; To incorporate the Virgin Lodge of Free Masons; To incorporate the Acadia Boot & Shoe Company.

PATENT LAW.

Hon. Mr. SHANNON moved the second reading of the bill he introduced on a former day, to amend the existing Patent Laws. The object is to grant patents to foreigners on the same terms that our own people can obtain them in foreign countries, thus establishing a reciprocity in respect to this subject. Under the existing law no foreigner or persons residing out of the Province, can procure a patent for an invention or secret. The mover earnestly advocated the provisions of the measure, and argued that its adoption would facilitate manufacturing operations, and materially enhance the interests of many branches of Provincial industry.

Hon. Mr. McFARLANE said that he was to some extent in favour of the bill for there could be no doubt whatever that the law at present on our statute book was exceedingly restrictive and calculated to prevent the introduction of necessary inventions and improvements in this country. He knew of the case of a gentleman who was desirous of introducing a system of bridges which was used largely in Canada with great advantage, but could not do so under our law. If some such system had been adopted here, a large saving would have been effected in all probability in this country. In view of the development of our mining interests he was of opinion some change was very desirable. He thought however, it would be advisable before adopting the bill of the hon. member for Halifax to see what was the scale of fees in the United States to which country it had especial reference.

Mr. BLANCHARD said that he had been on a committee for some years which had to deal with the question of patents. The policy of that committee was pretty much that of the bill now under consideration, but the house by a large majority, three sessions ago, passed the law as it at present stood. He pointed out cases where the law operated prejudicially to the interests of this country.

Hon. ATTY. GEN. said that he was to some extent responsible for the law which is now on the statute book, and he was still inclined to uphold it to a certain degree. It would be recollected that on an application for special permission to take out a patent, he opposed it on the ground that the article was one that could be manufactured by our own workmen. He was still opposed to opening a floodgate to all sorts of patents coming in either in the hands of the original patentees or their assignees.— There were a great many articles manufactured in the States and other countries that could be introduced here, without subjecting the inhabitants to the payment of any patent rights.

He was inclined to think that whilst we should not admit those that were in common use in other countries, we should allow those that were new to come into the province. The policy of the law in the States was to give a patent to a person belonging to any country that admitted their own people on the same terms as they offered. A citizen of the States had to pay \$30 for his patent to the institution that enquired into the merits of the invention. In New Brunswick the law was very free, but he did not think it was safe to go so far in this country, for we had not the machinery requisite to guard against the improper issue of patents. He thought it would be advisable to have the matter referred to a special committee for the purpose of considering it fully.

Hon. Mr. SHANNON stated that his object was to test the opinion of the house as to the policy of the present law.

Mr. ARCHIBALD said that a few years ago this house, by a very large majority, affirmed the principle of the present law. It appeared to him that the moment we put it into the power of any man to come into this country and take out a patent, we subjected the people to an amount of annoyance which we could not now conceive. A party applies for a patent; he swears it is a new invention; it is referred to the Attorney General, who, naturally enough, knows nothing about it, and the petition is granted. The whole difficulty, he thought, arose from the fact that we had no officer whose whole business it would be to investigate the claims of an article to a patent. Pass the bill before this house, and the result would be that we would have individuals stalking about the country, threatening everybody who attempted to violate a patent with an action. A person might contest the right of the patentee, and justify himself in a court of law; but who was going through all the paraphernalia and expense in reference to a matter which should have been decided in the first instance by the Crown Officer? Our mechanics were now able to go to the States and see any invention of a mechanical character, and come back and give us the benefits of their investigation. One class of patents, however, he thought, could be safely introduced: that was, those of which we could not get the secret on mere observation. For instance, he understood there were now certain inventions by which the gold can be extracted from quartz, even from that which contained sulphurated matter as at the "Ovens," with the exception of two per cent. If that process was a secret, it would not be introduced into Nova Scotia except by a patent; and therefore he thought such inventions might be safely allowed to come in. He concluded by expressing his opinion that it would be preferable to allow the whole subject of Patents to be referred to a special committee.

Hon. ATTY. GEN. differed from the views of the member for Colchester. He thought that if by establishing the reciprocity system a Nova Scotian could obtain in the United States for \$30 what it would now cost him \$500 it would be as well to alter the law.

Mr. ARCHIBALD said that if anybody really discovered any invention of practical value there was no difficulty in getting his rights protected.

Mr. LEVESCONTE cautioned the house against opening the door too wide. One Ame-