

liked. He did not pretend to know much about railways, but he was quite certain, nevertheless that some guarantee should have been required by the government as to the manner in which the road would be constructed. He had hoped, too, that the government would have had the power to send their Chief Engineer to look over the character of the work as it progressed. Knowing how necessary it was to have an efficient officer of this kind, he had asked the government to lay the credentials of Mr. McNab on the table. But on looking over the papers, he did not find any provision made for the supervision of the chief Engineer. As it was, the parties might build a road just of the kind that would suit themselves; the language throughout was exceedingly loose and vague. Taking the amount of subvention and that given for the construction of the Avon Bridge, the Province was called upon to pay \$91,200 for the period of twenty years. What was there to prevent this Company completing the Railway so as to entitle themselves to the amount and then give it up, at the period stipulated. He was also quite prepared to say that there were few gentlemen around the benches who had ever heard the names of any of the capitalists the hon. Provincial Secretary had so highly lauded, except that of Sir John D. Hay. He thought in the case of a matter of such grave importance the country should have more than ordinary assurance that these gentlemen were satisfactory security for the due performance of the undertaking. He did not pretend to say that these gentlemen were incompetent to perform the work, but was only desirous of protecting the interests of the province in every way that was practicable.

Hon. PROV. SEC. replied that if the hon gentleman would turn back to the discussion of the previous session when the act on which the last bill was based was passed, he would find his objections to a large extent removed. All the stipulations and provisions that the Legislature considered necessary when passing the act of last session were actually incorporated in the contract itself; the very first clause of the agreement would show this. The hon. member had said that if a person was building a house, he did not leave everything to the contractor, but bound him down to certain stipulations. The house, however, would see that his simile is not borne out by the facts as they exist in the present case. The Government were not going to build the railway for themselves. The road was to be constructed by the contractors so as to be their own property; and every person who knew anything of railway maintenance was aware that no Company could afford to keep up a railway for twenty years unless it was suitably constructed. The house knew that the remuneration offered by the country was very inadequate for the object expected to be gained, and that no capitalists were going to spend their own money for a road which would be comparatively useless. The period for which the railway had to be maintained was obviously sufficient guarantee that the work of construction would be efficiently performed. The motive that would impel the contractors was the most potent that can exist—self-interest. He would state that the parties in question purposed to lay down a heavier rail than

had been stipulated for; in order to make the line as efficient as possible, they had ordered rails of 56 lbs. to the yard, instead of 42 lbs. as per contract. They did this because they felt that the best mode they could pursue to get an adequate return for this capital was to construct the line as thoroughly as possible. It had been the impression in the house last winter, that the amount of remuneration offered by the Province was entirely inadequate; it must therefore be a matter of congratulation that we had been able with such slight inducements to obtain the construction of the work. The government had taken great pains to inform themselves of the standing of the capitalists that were to undertake this project. Mr. George Knight was at this moment a Railway Contractor of great eminence—reputed to be worth at least a quarter of a million of pounds. It was true that the limited Liability Company of Smith, Knight & Co., (who had nothing whatever to do with the railway project) had been involved in some difficulties, but these did not arise from any inability to discharge their engagements, but in consequence of a personal quarrel between the managing director, and the other shareholders. The stock had necessarily declined in the money market, but every gentleman who knew anything of the working of limited liability companies, was aware that these difficulties might arise without in the slightest degree affecting the financial position or wealth of any gentleman who happened to be connected with them. After investigation it had been found that the company was entirely solvent, and able to meet their engagements. The high position of Mr. Knight had not been touched in the least degree. As to the name of Mr. Chapman, it was quite familiar to all Bankers everywhere. Mr. ARCHIBALD said that in the contracts made with reference to the Trunk line, it was provided that the work should be of a particular character.

Hon. PROV. SEC. observed that it was not considered necessary to have any such stipulation for a line for the western counties where the traffic would be of light description; the reverse was done with respect to the Trunk line. A larger amount of traffic might be expected to go over it.

Mr. ARCHIBALD went on to say that it might be supposed from the fact that the company were going to place 56 lb rails on the line—that they had been led to believe that a large portion of the traffic that might run over the intercolonial road would go over their own road. Therefore it might be said that we were about to build up a line that is to compete with the Trunk Line for the trade from St. John. But what he was chiefly urging was, that he did not think that the government had exercised as large an amount of discretion as they should have done in a matter so important.

Hon. ATTY. GEN. said that he had listened with a great deal of attention to the remarks of the hon gentleman (Mr. Archibald), and he must say that they were by no means worthy of one of such high legal attainments. Turning to the acts passed for the building of railways in this Province, it would be found that the lines were to be a continuation of the Provincial railway. The hon gentleman said that these parties might build tramway, but he must