

for having done their work so well at such an immense reduction upon the prices paid to previous contractors. As to the other points, he thought that the honourable member who objected to the liabilities of the Dominion for old contracts with a zeal and warmth which he (Mr. Sanborn) thought were quite unnecessary. He conceived it but right to consider that the contracts in question had been entered into at a time when Confederation was not so much as contemplated, and it was but right that the Committee should take this into account. It was a maxim of Constitutional law that the agents bringing about a change which injudiciously affected any interest, was bound to provide a remedy. Those who brought about Confederation ought to feel responsible for the results it entailed. It had shocked him to hear the opinions of the Hon. Minister of Fisheries, for they amounted to nothing else than a repudiation of the obligations which had arisen under the contracts spoken of, and as the contractors were in no wise responsible for the changes of the Constitution, they certainly had a right to look for a fulfilment of the terms on the other side. But the honourable member had modified his views in his later remarks, and now admitted that the Federal Government was bound to see that the contractors did not suffer. They were he said, in the position of endorsers, who when the promissor made default, were bound to see the obligations honored; but there was no analogy at all between the cases. The party which whom the contracts were made was done away, and had in fact vanished, so that there was no other quarter to look for damages, if any arose, than the Federal Government. There the matter ended. The honourable member concluded by saying it should not go forth to the world that even were they only moral obligations, the Dominion was disposed to repudiate them. The Committee had put the matter in very mild terms, and he had no doubt the report would be adopted.

Hon. Mr. Letellier de St. Just was about to allude to the liabilities of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, in connection with the inauguration of the New Dominion, when—

Hon. Mr. Allan rose to order. The Committee in their report had placed no such issue before the House; but on the contrary based their recommendation on the ground that it was one of the most economical that could be made. The gentlemen from the Maritime provinces were strongly of this opinion,

thinking it the best arrangement possible, and we therefore conceived it to be quite unnecessary to enter into the question of the liability of Canada to carry out a contract.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell thought he had sufficiently explained himself. He neither denied his first nor subsequent explanations. What he said was that by the adoption of this report, the old Province of Canada would be relieved of all liability. An honourable friend had reminded him of the moral obligation which rested upon us in this matter of a contract. He should like to know if any moral obligation existed which would make it necessary for the Dominion to carry out to completion the contracts of Nova Scotia or New Brunswick. He certainly did not want Hunter, Rose & Co., or any special party, to come to them with special claims. He then apologized for having perhaps in the strict letter of the law been somewhat out of order, alleging that if the discussion had taken a wider range than was intended he was not responsible for it.

The report was adopted.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell moved that the Bill for the organization of the Department of Marine and Fisheries be read a second time on Thursday next.

Hon. Mr. Campbell stated that the Postal Regulation Bill had not yet been printed, and moved that the order for the second reading be discharged, and that it be read on Friday next.

Hon. Mr. Steeves—The Senate had been nearly a month in session, and there had been nothing before the House from the Government. He certainly expected that when the Governor-General called Parliament together the political machinery of the Government would be in working order. It might not be the fault of the Government that such was not the case, but, assuredly, as Parliament would in a few days more be adjourned until 1st March next, this delay was matter for regret.

Hon. Mr. Campbell said the Bill was quite ready, but he could do nothing in the way of expediting the translators, who had not yet completed their labors. He had already explained the reasons why business could not be so early begun in this as in the other House, and expressed the hope that he would be able to lay the English copy of the Bill before members to-morrow.