

the constitutionality of the Ontario Creditors' Relief Act, which I suppose he refers to, having arisen, that does not materially affect this Bill. It is not to the Province of Ontario alone that this Bill is intended to apply. It is intended to give relief to debtors who are entitled to relief all over the Dominion, and it will apply in Ontario to cases which do not come up under the Creditors' Relief Act, those of debtors who have made full assignments for the benefit of their creditors. That is a very minor point indeed, and I hope the Minister will allow the Bill to be gone on with to-night. No harm can possibly happen, as the Bill can be stopped at any stage of the proceedings, and there is another House before which it must come, and in which it will probably be fully discussed.

Mr. THOMPSON. It is true there will be abundant opportunities to consider the details of the Bill, but if we take the second reading we assent to its principle, and it affects very important principles in the Province of Ontario, and in other Provinces. I should like very much that the Bill should stand, but I will give the hon. gentleman a pledge that it will not be lost by the delay, and I do not ask it to stand longer than to-morrow.

Order allowed to stand.

#### PUBLIC MORALS AND PUBLIC CONVENIENCE.

Mr. CHARLTON moved second reading of Bill (No. 21) to amend the Act respecting public morals and public convenience. He said: I explained the character of the amendments briefly on the first reading. The Act passed last Session provided that the seduction of idiot or imbecile women should be a misdemeanor. One of the amendments proposed in this Bill is to add insane women to that list. The other is to restore the original provision with regard to seduction under promise of marriage. The Bill was changed in the Senate last year so as to restrict the age of the woman who could have a remedy under the Act to 13 years, the male not to be liable under the age of 21 years. The Bill proposes that the male shall be liable over the age of 18 years, and the women shall have a remedy up to the age of 21 years. The principle of the Bill was assented to by the House. The amendment with regard to insane persons is of the same character as the Bill passed last Session in the Ontario Legislature.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the second time.

#### OXFORD TO NEW GLASGOW RAILWAY.

Sir HECTOR LANGEVIN moved that, to-morrow, the House resolve itself into a Committee to consider the following resolution:

That it is expedient that the railway from Oxford to New Glasgow should be completed as a Government railway, and that, in addition to any unexpended balance of the sum of \$224,000 granted as a subsidy for the construction of the said railway by the Act 45 Victoria, chapter 14, there shall be granted to Her Majesty, for the said purpose, out of any unappropriated moneys forming part of the consolidated revenue fund of Canada, a sum of \$500,000.

Motion agreed to.

#### PUBLIC STORES.

Mr. THOMPSON moved second reading of Bill (No. 20) respecting Public Stores.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the second time, and House resolved itself into Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Mr. BLAKE. Perhaps the hon. gentleman will give some fuller statement of the specific circumstances which have led to the introduction of this proposal.

Mr. THOMPSON. I cannot state the circumstances more fully than this, that in Nova Scotia and Quebec it has at various times been found necessary to prosecute persons who had committed larceny in respect to public property, especially to that property which belongs to the Railway Department. The House is quite aware that in that Department, more than any other, goods and chattels which are public property are scattered at various points along the line. These consist not only of sleepers and rails but, more especially of tools used in the construction and repair of railways, such as pickaxes, axes, shovels, barrows and chattels of every description. It has been found practically impossible to prove the property, and the proposal which the Bill makes is that it shall be in the power of the head of each Department to establish certain marks which shall be put on goods of that description. Such marks shall be proof of the property of the Crown in respect of such stores, and penalties will be imposed, similar to those provided in chapter 170 of the Revised Statutes, against persons having goods of that description in their possession so marked, also against persons who counterfeit or obliterate the marks. On reference to chapter 170, hon. members will find that nearly all the provisions of this Bill are there contained in respect to property connected with the Departments of War and Admiralty. It was found necessary, and it was requested by the Imperial authorities for precisely the same reasons as those given now, that such an Act should be passed. It was passed in Nova Scotia, and was afterwards adopted in this Parliament, and we think it would be very desirable in order to meet the difficulties which have led to the loss of a large amount of public property by larceny, to establish the same provisions in respect to other Departments. The principal difficulty has been the identification of the property. The matter has been brought to the notice of my Department by our agents in those Provinces, who have experienced that difficulty in conducting public prosecutions, in respect to which there is no reason to doubt the sufficiency of proof in any other particular than that which arose from the impossibility of identifying the things which are precisely like those in use by other individuals. The same provisions will be found useful in connection with my own Department in the penitentiary service, although not to the same extent. These are the reasons for the Bill more than any special defalcations, which the hon. member seemed to suspect had led to the introduction of the Bill.

Mr. JONES. Clause 11 of this Bill reads:

"No person shall, without permission in writing from the Admiralty, or from some person authorised by the Admiralty in that behalf, creep, sweep, dredge or otherwise search for stores in the sea or any tidal or inland water, within one hundred yards from any vessel belonging to Her Majesty or in Her Majesty's service, or from any mooring place or anchoring place, appropriated to such vessels, or from any mooring belonging to Her Majesty, or from any of Her Majesty's wharves or docks, victualling or steam factory yards."

I think the hon. gentleman will remember that vessels in the harbor of Halifax sometimes lose their anchors in their moorings, particularly about the upper wharves, and under this Act they would not have power to employ persons to search for their own property without permission from the Admiralty or the Government. I remember several occasions, within my own knowledge, when steamers have had to slip their anchors or lose them or foul them with the Admiralty moorings and the Admiralty moorings off the deep-water terminus are rather an obstacle in the way at times. Of course they have to be respected, but when a steamer or sailing vessel drops its anchors there they would not have, under this clause, the right to search for their property without authority from the Admiralty.

Mr. THOMPSON. I do not think any difficulty has ever arisen in obtaining the necessary permission, from any undue insistence on the provision of the Act. I may say to the hon. gentleman, however, that that section is merely a