

last session. The hon. member for Guysboro' could not say that it was not the duty of the Commander-in-Chief to take advantage of the services of gentlemen who he thought were the most competent to give advice and information in reference to the future defences of this country. He trusted that whatever political differences might exist in this country, the militia organization would be kept free from all party taint. He was satisfied that the Commander-in-Chief in the selection of this Court—a selection with which the Executive Council had nothing whatever to do—had not given the slightest thought to party. If it did happen, that it was composed largely of gentlemen representing one party, it might be considered purely accidental. He stated frankly to the House that down to the present moment he had not endeavoured on any occasion to use the slightest political influence in relation to the militia organization of the country, and he was confident he could say the same thing for every member of the Executive Council.

Mr. ARCHIBALD did not agree with his Hon. friend, the member for Guysborough, in his opinion, that it was unconstitutional for His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, to summon a Council of advice upon matters which would come up for the consideration of the House. He rather thought that the Legislature should be glad to receive any suggestions or information that might be offered by those who had had an opportunity of testing the efficiency of the Militia law—and he therefore was inclined to the opinion that His Excellency was but discharging a duty that he owed, as well as to his own position as Commander-in-Chief, as to the Legislature who had to provide for the service,—in thus endeavouring to obtain such information as would tend to place the militia system upon a more efficient footing. But while he disagreed with the member for Guysborough, he was also obliged to dissent from the statement of the Hon. Pro. Sec'y, that the 85th section of the Militia Act, authorized the formation of a Court; such as that now in session. That clause evidently referred to Courts of Enquiry, upon matters of discipline only, and had no relation to the functions assumed by the present Court. The member for Guysboro' had also expressed the opinion that it was time that some responsible person, in connection with the militia, should have a seat in the Legislature. He (Mr. A) was at a loss to reconcile that statement with the anxiety of that Honorable gentleman to disavow this service from the influence of party politics.

Mr. CAMPBELL—It is the case in Canada.

Mr. ARCHIBALD—It may be so, but I am exceedingly doubtful as to the propriety of the policy. In alluding to the statement made by the member for Guysboro' that the Militia Court was composed almost entirely of persons of one side of politics, Mr. Archibald expressed his regret if such was the case—at the same time he was convinced that it must be the result of accident, for he was certain that His Excellency would be the last man to sanction anything of that kind.

Mr. COLIN CAMPBELL said that as militia matters were under discussion, he had a case in connection with that subject, which he wished to bring under the consideration

of the House, and he would like to be informed by the Government whether the Adjutant General was to be guided by the decision of a Committee of the House or not. At the last Session he had presented a petition from Captain James B. Stewart, of Clare in the County of Digby, praying for remuneration for certain services performed by him in 1862, in connection with the enrolment of the Militia in that County. A Committee of the House recommended that the sum of \$30 should be paid to him, which was adopted by the House, and an order for that amount was first presented to the Receiver General, and refused payment, and afterwards to the Adj. Genl., from whose office it was returned with an endorsement by the Commander-in-Chief, to the effect that it would offer a bad precedent to pay it. He (Mr. C.) should like to be informed whether the Militia authorities were not bound to obey the directions of a Committee of the House.

Hon. PROV. SEC. thought it was quite competent for the Commander-in-Chief, under the 77th clause of the Militia Act, to call together a Board of Advice, in order to obtain information as to the best mode to provide for the defences of the Country. He could not see how it interfered with the privileges of the House, inasmuch as the deliberations of the Court had no operation until sanctioned and approved by the Legislature.

Mr. PRYOR said that as allusion had been made by the Hon. member for Guysboro to the party complexion of the Militia Court, he considered it but justice to the government to state that, if such were the case, they had nothing to do with it. And, indeed, until that hon. gentlemen had called attention to the subject, he (Mr. P.) was not aware that such an imposition could be alleged against it. He considered it a question entirely aloof from party, and when the committee was about being filled up he suggested the name of a person opposed to him politically, whose services he considered necessary. The court had been visited by persons of all shades of politics, and amongst others he would name the member for South Colchester, (Col. Parker) who had given the Court the benefit of his advice.

Hon. FINL. SEC. said that if there was any party complexion it must be accidental—for instance his own county (Pictou) was represented by Col. Carmichael who was opposed to him in politics, and who had been selected in preference to other gentlemen of equal rank whose politics concided with those of the present government.

Mr. S. CAMPBELL said that he was aware that Col. Carmichael was on the Board and therefore he was guarded when he made the statement that nearly all the members were of one side of politics. He was not aware of another person on that side.

Mr. PRYOR said he might be mistaken, but he was inclined to think that Capt. MacKinlay, who was one of the officers who represented the volunteers, was on the same side of politics.

Hon. Mr. SHANNON thought that a great deal of time was unnecessarily wasted on this discussion. After all, the object of the Court was simply to obtain the experience of those interested in the subject, and to make suggestions and amendments in the present system.