

The House then adjourned on motion of Hon. Mr. CAMPBELL.

TUESDAY, May 6.

The SPEAKER took the chair at three o'clock.

After routine,

THIRD READINGS.

Hon. Mr. CAMPBELL moved the third reading of the steamboat inspection bill; also the third reading of the seamen's desertion preventive laws amendment bill. Carried.

Hon. Mr. CAMPBELL moved the reference of the Militia and Defence Law Amendment Bill back to committee, to make some verbal alteration to suit the different local institutions of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Instead of Municipality County was used in certain cases, and instead of Justices of the Peace, the Custos or Chairman of the Court of Sessions might act in calling out the Militia. Carried; bill as amended read a third time.

THE INTERCOLONIAL RAILWAY.

Hon. Mr. CAMPBELL moved the third reading of the bill from the Commons, entitled the Intercolonial Railway Construction Law Amendment Bill.

Hon. Mr. LETELLIER DE ST. JUST said that perhaps the Government were ready to state whether they would adopt some scheme for the better protection of the country from the contractors for this road. Large amounts, it had appeared, were granted to some who had no just claim. They had been allowed for any trifling increase of the work on their sections, but nothing was deducted for diminutions of the work. Such reductions were to turn to the advantage of the Dominion. The contractors ought now to be told their contracts must be executed in a *bona fide* manner, and not made the means of extracting from the Government moneys to which no just claim existed.

Hon. Mr. CAMPBELL was not aware his hon. friend intended saying anything on this subject, and was therefore not prepared to follow him. Besides, being a money question, it had largely engaged the attention of the other House. The present bill was merely to change the gauge of the Intercolonial.

Hon. Mr. LETELLIER DE ST. JUST said if that was so, it was a matter of congratulation. Members on that side of the House had striven for two or three sessions to induce the Government

to make this change in the interest of the country, but in vain. We were losing now some millions by the change, which, a few years ago, could have been effected without expense.

Hon. Mr. CAMPBELL was sorry there should be any discussion on the subject, but he could not allow the hon. gentleman's words to go unanswered. The reason for not changing the gauge previously was the inability of the Grand Trunk, which joined the Intercolonial, to adopt the narrow gauge. But quite lately the G. T. R. had found a way of effecting this improvement, which altered the whole case. There were two hundred or three hundred miles of other roads in the Lower Provinces, on the broad gauge connecting with the G. T. R., so that there seemed no sound reason for our making the change before. The hon. gentleman was entirely misinformed as to the loss the country would sustain. It would be comparatively trifling, involving the change of one rail from River du Loup to Trois Pistoles. The rolling stock for the broad gauge could be used on roads in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. A third rail would be laid from Moncton to Halifax, thus forming a continuous line on the narrow gauge from one end to the other of the road. The cost of the new rail to Trois Pistoles, would not exceed \$50000 or \$100,000 he believed.

Hon. Mr. LETELLIER DE ST. JUST said if he recollected well, the hon. Minister of Public Works stated the loss by the change of gauge would not exceed \$600,000. It was the plant that would cost.

Hon. Mr. CAMPBELL said he did not know what that hon. Minister referred to, because the plant would be used on the broad gauge roads in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, including the lines from Shediac to St. John, Pictou to Halifax, Halifax to Windsor, and Truro to Amherst.

Hon. Mr. LETELLIER DE ST. JUST—So the policy of the Government on this question was to be subservient to the Grand Trunk, and all our railways from Halifax to the Pacific are to be subservient to that road. But shortly after last session the Grand Trunk Railway was changing the gauge on over one hundred miles of its road in the West, which shows it was then contemplating a general improvement in this direction, and could not without injury maintain the old gauge.

Hon. Mr. FERRIER thought it was not fair to reflect upon the Government for not anticipating, a year ago or more, a change which had suddenly come upon