

completed within a reasonable time, not to exceed four years from and after the passing of this Act."

Bill reported.

On motion for third reading,

Mr. BLAKE moved in amendment :

That the Bill be recommitted to a Committee of the Whole, to amend the same by providing that in order to secure as far as may be the continued operation of the railways towards which it is proposed to grant subsidies for the purpose of supplying them with steel rails, it shall not be lawful to remove the rails from any of such railways, save for the purpose of replacing them with the other rails as occasion may require.

Amendment negatived, lost on a division; Bill read the third time and passed.

THE ST. JOHN BRIDGE AND RAILWAY EXTENSION COMPANY.

Sir LEONARD TILLEY, in moving that the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider a certain proposed resolution (May 15th) respecting a loan to the St. John Bridge and Railway Extension Company, said: This proposition is one which I am satisfied, judging from the opinions expressed by hon. members in discussing the railway resolutions, will meet with the general approval of both sides of this House. It will be remembered that in the discussion of those resolutions there was a general opinion expressed in favor of completing as soon as possible the railway system from one end of the Dominion to the other, and that we should shorten the distance and cheapen the cost of transit. That seemed to be the unanimous feeling on the part of the House. Now, the difficulties that exist at the present moment are very great indeed, arising from the absence of the competition of the link which this proposition is about to accomplish. It is well known that one of the objects of the promoters of the Intercolonial Railway or European and North American Railway was to induce travellers coming from Europe to America to make Halifax the landing point; and it will be remembered that the project which is spoken of so favorably in the House, the Great American and European Short Line Railway, is a bid for this particular line of business, the conveyance of passengers and mails between Europe and America by the shortest route possible, and in the shortest time possible. That being the case the proposition of this company is that, by the completion of their line, between forty and fifty miles in distance would be saved. The company will be in competition with any line that may be established at Halifax with the same object; but I am led to believe that one of the obstacles to the Great American and European Short Line Railway in going round by Woodstock and Houlton, in the State of Maine, and to the sea-board is the want of a bridge at St. John. They have already a bridge at Woodstock, and, therefore, no delays occur there from such a want. Let us suppose that the company have constructed their railway line and have established their line of steamers, one of the difficulties will be crossing at St. John. To cross by ferry will probably create a delay of an hour and a-half, and that will be practically equivalent to reducing the distance between extreme points of the route by from sixty to seventy-five miles. No portion of the Dominion is more interested in having a direct line from Nova Scotia or New Brunswick to the United States or Montreal than the eastern and northern part of New Brunswick. The fisheries of the northern part of that Province have been very largely developed by the construction of the European Railway, and their value has been largely increased by the company's ability to transmit fish in ice to the American markets. But a difficulty exists there, as will be seen by reference to reports made on the subject, and it is referred to in Mr. Schreiber's report. Suppose a train with a quantity of fresh fish in ice arrives on the western side of the harbor of St. John, and it

proves to be too late to be taken across by ferry and make connection with the western road, a day is lost which is of the utmost importance to parties interested in that line of business. Under these circumstances all the eastern and northern parts, and all parts of Nova Scotia, which desire to send fresh fish to the United States as well as to Montreal by a direct line of railway, are materially interested in the completion of the proposed bridge at St. John, because every one is aware of the difficulty, the increased expenditure, and the delay that occurs for transshipment. The importance of building this bridge was brought before the Government of Canada as far back at 1871-72 by the Western Extension Company. That company subsequently got into difficulties, and of late years the trustees of the road have been working the lines, but two years ago a gentleman obtained a charter from the New Brunswick Legislature for the construction of a line and bridge. That company came to the Government and applied for assistance. They have obtained financial assistance from roads running west from St. John, the European and North American, and the Central Maine, equal to \$5,000 a year, in addition to payments for freight transmitted. The company approach the Government, having obtained this assistance from roads going west, which is equivalent to \$100,000 towards the completion of the work, and asks for a Government grant in aid. The matter was submitted to the hon. Minister of Railways. He asked for a report by the Chief Engineer, and that report was obtained, in which the importance of the completion of the link was pointed out. The Government decided that they would not give the company a money subsidy, but they would give them an equivalent, which, at the same time, would cost the Dominion nothing; that they would grant them 80 per cent. of the cost of the work at 4 per cent. interest, thereby giving the company the benefit of 2 per cent., as they would probably have to pay 6 per cent. interest in the open market. The company have accepted that proposal, and the Government now come to Parliament and ask permission to grant the loan on a lien of the line, and if the bridge is not completed within the time specified, the Government will have the right to take it out of the company's hands and construct it. It has been a question as to whether it would not be proper for the Government themselves to build the bridge, and there is a good deal to be said in favor of that suggestion in view of the importance of the work. But the company have the charter, and the Government could not interfere without constructing it at some other point than the Falls. It can be constructed there so far above the water as not to interfere with navigation. There is a suspension bridge there already, and it is proposed to build this additional bridge a little higher, and the result will be, as I have said, not to interfere with navigation. There is an objection to this proposal on the part of a portion of the inhabitants of St. John, especially those residing on the western side of the harbor. These some years ago took \$40,000 worth of stock in the Carleton branch road, which leads from the present terminus of the European and North American into Carleton. Having that amount invested in that branch, they urge that connection should be made by their branch crossing at Navy Island, in the harbor of St. John. When the charter was obtained by the company two years ago, a Committee of the Local Legislature was appointed to enquire into the desirability of granting the charter. The representatives of the western side of the harbor presented all their arguments in favor of their plan, but a large majority of the Committee reported in favor of a suspension bridge as against a bridge at Navy Island. In 1874, a Bill was introduced by the hon. member for York, N.B. (Mr. Pickard), to construct a bridge at Navy Island. At that time a protest was entered—it is on the Table now—on the part of the Corporation of St. John, against it; and the river counties, as a rule, protest against it, because it