

SATURDAY, May 4.

The House met at 11 o'clock.

Hon J MCKINNON introduced a bill to improve roads and bridges in Antigonish.

POST OFFICE REPORT.

Mr. BOURINOT moved that the report of the Post Office Committee be adopted.

Mr. KAULBACK called attention to the fact that several petitions had been presented to the committee for a daily mail to Lunenburg. A numerous signed petition had also come before them in respect to the unsatisfactory way in which the mails were now carried. A daily mail was necessary for the growing requirements of Mahone Bay, Chester and Bridgewater, as well as Lunenburg. The House should know that the service could be performed without additional expense to the Province; for the Messrs. King offered to take the contract for a daily mail at the same sum that was now given for a tri-weekly mail. Under these circumstances he moved the following amendment:

"Whereas the Messrs. King have offered to convey a daily mail between Halifax and Liverpool, and a tri-weekly between Liverpool and Shelburne, for the same sum now paid for three mails; Therefore Resolved, that the Post Office report be amended so as to give a daily mail as far as Liverpool upon the terms proposed, the offer to be first made to the present contractor, and if declined, then to be handed to the Messrs. King or submitted to tender."

Mr. BOURINOT, chairman of the Committee, said that if Lunenburg had been given a daily mail, the same privilege must have been extended to very many other places. Besides, a great many applications for additional routes came before the committee, especially from Lunenburg, and it would have been impossible to consider these favorably if the daily mail accommodation asked for was granted. Under all the circumstances the committee decided that it was not advisable to extend the daily mail service. No county received a greater amount of consideration than Lunenburg, at the hands of the committee. The application of the Messrs. King had been carefully considered, but the committee felt it could not be granted without interfering with the rights of another party. If there were grounds of complaint against the present contractor, the matter ought to be brought before the Postmaster General. It must also be known that when the Messrs. King lost the contract some years ago, they still kept on the line, and did their utmost to drive the present contractor off. The petition presented against the mode in which the mails were now carried was not sufficient to induce the committee to interfere with the contractor.

Mr. ANNAND said it appeared that a large sum of money had been given to the contractor, in addition to his contract, during the past year. He considered it most improper that a thousand dollars should be given to any one, without the service having been offered again to tender. Nor could he see why there should be any hesitation in giving the additional mail accommodation asked for, when it could be granted without entailing

any greater expense upon the Province. As he understood it, the Messrs King were willing to take the property of the present carriers at a fair valuation, as determined by arbitrators.

Mr. COFFIN alluded to the loss the present contractors had sustained in consequence of King's line having been kept up. He could say that, on the whole, the present contractor was well up to time so far as the westward portion of the route was concerned. In fact the service was as well performed as it had ever been before under any previous contractor. The only delay that occurred was during two or three months of the year when travelling everywhere was impeded. The present contractor had made great improvements in the line, and was ready to allow it to be inspected, and if the result of the inspection was not satisfactory he would abide the result. He believed it would be very disastrous to the public interests to allow private individuals to come and take away a contract from another in the summary mode proposed by the Messrs King. He understood that the additional grant referred to had been given in consequence of a steamer having been put on the western route, and thereby most materially interfering with the contractor. He had felt that it would not have been right to extend daily mails all over the Province, at a time when we are about entering upon a new state of political relations.

Hon PROV. SECY explained that the grant of \$1000 had been given on the recommendation of the Postmaster General, and in view of the fact that the contractor had lost largely by the placing of a steamer on the western shore since his contract had been entered into. Of course, if the steamer stopped running, the grant would not be continued. As respects that portion of the report which referred to the Postmaster General, he said that both sides of the House would agree that no public officer had ever discharged his onerous duties more faithfully or more efficiently than Mr Woodgate.

Mr ANNAND also alluded in terms of encomium to the Postmaster General.

Hon ATTY GEN also coincided in the remarks made by previous gentlemen in respect to Mr Woodgate, with whom, as a chairman of the Post Office Committee, and as a member of the Government, he had, for very many years, been constantly brought into contact. He also alluded to Mr Passow—a faithful public servant for very many years; and expressed the opinion that the House would cheerfully acquiesce in the increase of salary granted to that gentleman as some recognition of his public services. He then went on to explain that the additional grant had been given to the contractor on the western shore line on the recommendation of the Postmaster General, and otherwise showed that the report was the best that could be made, under all the circumstances.

Mr JOST was in favor of a daily mail, but in view of the large consideration that had been extended to Lunenburg, and the other reasons given by the committee for refusing the application in question, he felt it his duty to support the report.