

### RETURNS ORDERED.

Copies of all documents, memorials, plans, engineer's reports and correspondence in relation to the dredging of Lavallière Bay.—(Mr. Bruneau.)

Copies of all documents, memorials and correspondence between the Government and the Corporation and Board of Trade of the town of Sorel and other persons respecting the granting of a subsidy for the construction of a bridge on the Richelieu river to connect the town of Sorel with the Montreal and Sorel Railway.

### LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) Before going into the Orders of the Day, I would ask the leader of the House a question in respect to a Bill which was reserved for the consideration of His Excellency the Governor General by Lieutenant Governor Carvell, of Prince Edward Island. I wish to know whether that Bill has been received by the Government here; whether the hon. gentleman has had an opportunity of examining its provisions; whether, in view of what I gathered from his remarks the other day, that he would return the Bill to the Lieutenant Governor at an early date to take constitutional action in the matter, anything has been done?

Mr. FOSTER. I think the hon. gentleman had better repeat his question when the leader of the Government is in the House. I have not seen the Bill.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.) I will crave the privilege of repeating my question when the leader is in his place.

### ALIEN LABOUR IMPORTATION.

On the Order to resume the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. Taylor, that the Bill (No. 4) to prohibit the importation and migration of foreigners and aliens under contract or agreement to perform labour in Canada, be read a second time; and the motion of Sir John Thompson in amendment thereto, "That the said Bill be read a second time this day six months."

Amendment agreed to.

### OBSCENE LITERATURE, &c.

Mr. CHARLTON moved second reading of Bill (No. 21) for the suppression of obscene literature, and to provide for the punishment of certain immoral and criminal practices. He said: In presenting this motion to the House I may be met, possibly, by the taunt that has sometimes been presented against proposed legislation of a similar character, namely, that this is a moral Bill, designed to make men better by Act of Parliament. Now, I am quite willing to admit that legislation for the purpose of making men either religious or moral, is useless; but it is perfectly within the province of a Legislature to discourage by appropriate legislation immorality or irreligion, and perfectly proper to adopt such measures, such enactments, as may be calculated to promote morality and religion, or whatever may be in the interest of the state. It is true that Governments deal more usually with questions of finance, with fiscal questions, with questions relating to taxation and expenditure, with questions relating to customs duties, and with laws for the protection of life and property—than with measures of the kind now under the consideration of the House. It is also true that the best means

for promoting morality and religion are: first, teachings in the family; secondly, teachings in the school; and thirdly, the teachings of the church. This Bill does not propose to usurp the functions of either the family, the school or the church; but it does propose to make certain provisions intended to check certain evils so far as the power of the Government may be able to check them. We have, Sir, the fact meeting us everywhere in history that nations rise to prominence and to power in consequence of the exercise of virtue, of industry, and of the public virtues that are calculated to strengthen a people. We have in history the evidence that many nations have passed from the stage of human action and have left as evidence of their existence, only ruined temples, and here and there a pyramid and mounds of burnt brick. These are all the mementos left of imperial greatness and world-wide power in the case of many nations. We have no reason to doubt that if virtue is maintained, if integrity is maintained, if industry is maintained, a nation may exist through all time. Nations enter upon their periods of decadence through effeminacy, that is the result of vice, or corruption or of crime. Now, if this is true, there is no higher function of the state than that of providing for the welfare of the people and for the stability of their power by encouraging virtue, and by discouraging anything that may be of a contrary character. One of the highest functions of the state is for the authorities of the state themselves to give the example of a pure administration of public affairs, to abstain from corrupt practices and to set a good example in everything that pertains to their own management of the affairs entrusted to their charge. No higher functions rests upon the Government of a nation or of a people, than to guard the morals and to promote the public welfare of the people in every way that it is possible to do so by legislation; and they should cherish every influence that gives prosperity and stability to the institutions of a country. Now, it may be asserted that this is merely a Bill designed to make the people good, and I may be met with the sneers that I have often met with in this connection. It may be said that to attempt to assume the guardianship in any degree whatever, of young or old in our country, is an act of folly, and something that we should not lose time in discussing. Some may take objection to the Bill on the ground that it is an infringement of provincial rights. I shall read a few provisions of the Bill, as it is a brief one, that the House may know whether an objection of that kind will lie against the Bill. The fact is, Sir, that influences are at work in this country that are calculated to debase the morals of the people; influences are at work that may be checked and may properly be met by legislation in this House. Vile literature is secretly and widely circulated in Canada, literature of a character calculated to undermine the morals of the people, and entail the most disastrous consequences on society. Improper and obscene, or semi-obscene literature is imported into this country and openly sold. Drugs and instruments for procuring abortion and for kindred purposes are advertised secretly and are sold by agents, and this abuse cannot very readily be reached by the law as it now stands. Immodest and objectionable posters are posted, and the young in this country are exposed to influences