

following reasons: That the reduction from \$105,000 to \$59,500 of the amount to be expended on the total mileage and from \$52,500 to \$29,750 per mile renders it impossible to proceed with this work, as the estimates in detail will show.

Hon. Mr DANDURAND: Honourable gentlemen, this message expresses the agreement of the House of Commons to two important amendments which were moved by the honourable gentleman from Grenville (Hon. Mr. Reid), but disagreement as to the amendment which was made to the schedule. The estimate contained in the schedule was for an expenditure of \$52,500 per mile. That figure was reduced by the Senate to \$29,750. The Minister of Railways obtained an estimate of construction from the engineers justifying an expenditure of \$45,652 per mile. It was found that the figure of 2 miles stated in the estimate was erroneous, and that the railway would cover 2.3 miles. So, after consultation with the honourable gentleman from Grenville, it has been agreed to ask the Law Clerk to amend the schedule in order to allow \$45,000 and some odd per mile instead of \$52,500. We will suspend the further examination of this question until we have the report of the Law Clerk.

Further consideration of the message was postponed.

PENSION BILL

SECOND READING.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND moved the second reading of Bill 255, An Act to amend the Pension Act.

He said: Honourable gentlemen, this Bill, which reaches us at this late hour of the Session, is the result of the work of a Royal Commission presided over by Mr. Ralston. The Report of the Commission was reviewed by a special Committee of the House of Commons which sat during the greater part of the Session to hear all who had representations to make. After long deliberation, that Committee reported quite late in the Session, and the Minister of Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment simply took the report and embodied the recommendations contained in it in the Bill which is now before us.

The Bill was presented to the Commons for second reading this week, and was passed by that House the day before yesterday,—I think I may say without any vestige of deliberation, so far as I can learn from looking at the Commons Debates. That is to say, at the close of the Session this important legislation was accepted by the Commons as it came from the Committee.

The Bill is now before us, and I move the second reading, and I await with some trepidation the opinion of the House as to how we should deal with it.

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: Honourable gentlemen, there have been very few subjects with regard to which the Senate has suffered more misrepresentation than on the question of pensions. Last Session a Bill was presented to us at an advanced stage of the Session, and no one can gainsay that the Senate gave it the most mature consideration. Yet apparently the result of our deliberations was not satisfactory. Notwithstanding the fact that our Committee sat for nearly a month considering the subject, I doubt whether the members of this House were satisfied with the judgment of the Committee.

Now there comes before us a Pension Bill of an equally important character, involving consideration of some of the most complex questions that can be entered upon—questions which, resolved into dollars and cents, mean a very substantial charge upon the Dominion. This Bill is entitled to the very best judgment and the most careful deliberation that the members of this Chamber can give it; but it is quite apparent that a Bill coming before us after prorogation has been announced by the Prime Minister cannot receive the consideration to which it is entitled.

If it were not for the fact that the bonus which has been paid to the beneficiaries of the Pension Act will lapse before next year, thus requiring action during the present Session, in all probability nothing might be done. That, however, being the case, it is necessary to take some action to extend the bonus for next year, provided we are then to give consideration to the Bill.

I would feel inclined to do more than that, honourable gentlemen; I would say that in the very short time at our disposal we should give consideration to this Bill. While we may not be able to give it the consideration that it would have received had we had sufficient time to go into it at length, yet it will not be open to anyone to say that we have ignored the duty which falls upon our shoulders, even though we detain Parliament for a greater period than otherwise it would be detained. I venture to say that if my honourable friend will consent, even at this late moment, to the appointment of a Committee composed of eight members, four to be named by my honourable friend and four by myself, it will be able to report to this Chamber at a reasonable hour during the afternoon. I am not going the length of