

Pond, Prince Edward Island, in room of James Phee and Benjamin D. Waite, who were both dismissed in 1888?

Mr. BOWELL. It is not the intention of the Government to appoint preventive officers for Tignish and Nail Pond, until, in the opinion of the Government, such officers are necessary for the protection of the revenue.

SUBWAY ACROSS THE STRAITS OF NORTH-UMBERLAND.

Mr. PERRY asked, Is it the intention of the Government to place in the Estimates, during the present Session, a sum sufficient to build the subway across the Straits of Northumberland, connecting Prince Edward Island with the mainland, in accordance with the terms of Confederation, and as promised by Sir John A. Macdonald in a letter to Senator Howlan, dated January 28th, 1887?

Mr. FOSTER. The final clauses of the question are scarcely in order, as containing a statement of alleged facts. If my hon. friend will consent to the withdrawal of those, I will answer the question by saying that the intention of the Government will be shown in the Estimates which will shortly be laid before the House.

THE BROTHERS LÉBOURDAIS.

Mr. CASGRAIN asked. Whether the Government has had any correspondence respecting the trial of the two brothers, Lebourdais, from the County of L'Islet, which took place in Liverpool, England, in December last; and if so, whether the Government has taken, or will take, any action in the matter?

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. I find that the Government has had no correspondence on the subject, but a memorial was presented within the last few days, and in that memorial the wish was expressed that the case should be transmitted to Her Majesty. The conviction referred to in the question took place in Scotland, and His Excellency the Governor General has been moved to transmit the memorial for the consideration of Her Majesty's ministers.

FRAUDS UPON FARMERS.

Mr. BROWN moved:

That a Special Committee be appointed to enquire into the fraudulent practices which have prevailed, and still prevail, in various parts of the Dominion, by which farmers and others have been and are induced to give their promissory notes and securities to a very large amount in the aggregate, for seed, agricultural implements, grape vines, and other goods and merchandise, by various false pretexts; the goods in some cases never being delivered, and in other cases being comparatively worthless, the makers of such promissory notes being obliged to make payment, while the perpetrators of these wrongs evade justice; with power to send for persons, papers and records, and examine on oath or affirmation, where affirmation is allowed by law, such witnesses as may appear before the said committee, and to report what remedies exist in such cases, or what further remedies should be provided; said committee also be empowered to employ a shorthand writer to take down such evidence as it may deem necessary, and to consist of Messrs. Amyot, Barron, Brown, Carpenter, Coochrane, Desjardins, Fisher, Ferguson (Welland), Hale, McMullen, Marshall, Mills (Annapolis), Moncrieff, Rowand, Smith (Ontario), Welsh, and Wood (Brockville).

He said: In making this motion, I desire to say that the committee appointed last Session prosecuted their labors with all diligence during the limited time they had, and the work they did has borne very good fruit. During the recess the members of the committee, from the various parts of the country, in their several constituencies, have received further information as to the frauds committed and especially in that part of the country from which I come, vine-growers have been swindled, and desire to give evidence before the committee.

Mr. PERRY.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. I think, before the House consents to this motion, we ought to have some information as to what the probable cost will be, and also what has been the cost of the enquiry that was gone into last Session. You are aware, Mr. Speaker, that a large committee was appointed last Session; a large number of witnesses were brought here, no doubt, at great expense, from a great distance; a large amount of evidence was collected, which was printed and distributed. Now, I submit that all that must involve a large cost to the country, and the question comes up, whether the results to be obtained are sufficiently important to justify the additional cost. These are points on which the House should be satisfied before they commit themselves to further expenditure in this matter. It seems to me that the evidence taken last year, voluminous as it was and costly as it was, was certainly sufficient to form a basis for the Government and the House to judge whether such legislation was necessary or not, and on what line such legislation should be enacted. I am one of those who have not much faith in that kind of enquiry and that sort of legislation. The fact of the matter is, that the great mass of the farmers of this Dominion and others, to whom reference is made, are not fools. It is true that here and there are found a few who can be gulled by such practices as those referred to, but they form a very small minority, and I submit that the great bulk of the farmers and traders in the Dominion are perfectly capable of taking care of themselves, and, so far as that small minority is concerned, committees might sit from now till doomsday, and enact as many laws as they please, and yet fail to save them from being taken advantage of. I hold that sufficient enquiry has been made to enable the House to judge whether such legislation is necessary or not, and what that legislation should be, and there is no necessity to burden the country with further cost for procuring evidence.

Mr. McMULLEN. In regard to the remarks of the hon. member, I may say that I happened to be a member of the committee in question. The committee got to work very late in the Session, and the opportunity to gather information of the kind necessary to enable them to form an opinion as to whether legislation was needed or not, was very limited. The information secured was of decided advantage to those who possibly might, from limited information and experience, be taken advantage of by those who are always waiting to take advantage of simple-minded men. I endorse to some extent the remarks made by the hon. member for Middlesex (Mr. Armstrong); still I contend that there is a very respectable percentage of the farming community and the trading public who, from time to time, are victimised by men who make it a business to go from door to door and take advantage of these people. If we can, by any investigation or by any legislation enacted by this House, give those people information or pass such legislation as will prevent repetition of the frauds perpetrated, I think it will be wise and prudent on the part of this House to aid in any possible way the hon. gentleman who is asking for this committee. I am willing to consent that the expenditure should be incurred, and I know the expense last year was very limited. I can say for the chairman of the committee that he was exceedingly careful in regard to the expenditure, and that, when any person was asked to be brought before the committee, it was only when it appeared that he would be able to give good evidence, and, after an idea of the expense had been obtained, the chairman ordered the witness to be subpoenaed. I have no doubt he will follow the same prudent course this year, and, if he does so, I believe the committee will be of decided advantage to the simple-minded people in this country who are taken advantage of from time to time.

Motion agreed to.