

Hon. Mr. LANDRY—What is the effect of the amendment?

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—In the original Act of 1902, there was a clause authorizing the State Department to issue letters patent for all purposes except for the construction and organization of railways, telegraphs and telephones. It was not intended that a contractor should be debarred from taking a contract, for instance, to supply poles for a telegraph line, or to build a railway as a chartered company; but the court has held that under the language of the statute, the word 'construction' is so wide that a company authorized to construct public works for instance—and a number of charters of that kind have been issued—would not have power under the Act to take a contract for the construction of a section of railway. In order to remove that, a member of the House of Commons introduced a Bill in the early part of the session to amend the Act in that particular, to make it clear that this word 'construction' had been interpreted by the courts too widely. The intention of the Act was that a company might be chartered to undertake the construction of a railway, a telephone or a telegraph line, but not to organize or hold a charter. However, we took up the Bill here and passed it, and it went to the House of Commons where exception was taken to it. As the Bill contained other clauses which were useful, it was thought better to drop this clause. The Bill contains, for instance, a provision in which the leader of the opposition took an interest last session and this session, that is where shares are less than \$100 and the company desires to consolidate them, it can be done. There was an omission in the Act of 1902, a provision intended to authorize the directors of a company to accept bills of exchange and give promissory notes without obtaining the authority of the shareholders, or without the passage of a by-law. That Act had been a long time on the statutes, but through an accident it was omitted from the Act of 1902, and this Bill has a clause supplying that deficiency.

Hon. Mr. LANDRY—What is the clause struck out by the House of Commons?

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—The clause is as follows:

78

3. Nothing in this section, or in any charter or letters patent heretofore or hereafter issued, shall be deemed to prevent any company to which this Act applies from acting as a contractor in railway, telegraph or telephone construction.

A company chartered for construction purposes cannot take a contract for the construction of a railway, telegraph or telephone. That is the effect of it.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND—That is the effect of it as far as the Bill goes, but there is a considerable question as to the right contained in the provision of the law of granting those letters patent. This clause was more a declaratory clause than otherwise, because legal opinions are not unanimous on that point.

The motion was agreed to.

THE RULES OF THE HOUSE.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—It will be within the recollection of hon. gentlemen that at the close of last session the hon. leader of the opposition suggested that in order to preserve better order and decorum than has prevailed, I am sorry to say during the session just closing, the Speaker should be vested with more authority than he possesses under the rules as they exist. The hon. gentleman suggested that a committee should be struck at the beginning of the present session for the purpose of framing rules of that character. Unfortunately, nothing was done. A few days before he left here, he made a similar suggestion, with the hope that at the beginning of next session, rules would be framed to confer on the Speaker power to preserve proper decorum in the Senate, practically powers possessed by the Speaker of the House of Commons. The House is separating without anything having been done. I would suggest that the Speaker himself, and other hon. gentlemen, might prepare suggestions and when we meet next year, a committee could be struck to take those suggestions into consideration and from them frame rules for our own observance.

Hon. Mr. LANDRY—I quite agree with the proposition of the hon. gentleman, and I hope members who are not present here to-day will be notified—at all events, that those who have occupied the position of Speaker in the past, Sir Alphonse Pelletier