

FRANCHISE BILL PETITIONS.

Mr. SPROULE. Before the Orders of the Day are called, I would like to say a few words in reference to the letter that was presented to this House last week, in answer to some remarks made by the hon. member for King's N.S. (Mr. Woodworth). It was in reference to some criticism he had made about a petition sent from Meaford against the passing of the Franchise Bill. One of the parties whose attention was attracted to that item in the *Hansard*, drew up a declaration setting forth that the signatures were made by the parties as represented in the petition, and a letter was read in the House by the hon. member for North Grey (Mr. Allen), purporting to be from one of those parties, but which in reality was from McMillan, who is one of those who carried round the petition for signature. I marked the copy of the *Hansard* containing that letter, and sent it to Mr. Oliver, who was referred to in it, and asked if the expressions made use of by him as stated, or if he had anything to say about it. In reply, I have received a letter from him dated June 5th, and addressed "I. S. Sproule, Ottawa."

"DEAR SIR,—In reply to your question, as written on the margin of the House of Commons *Debates*, now before me, I beg to say that, in conversation with Mr. McMillan, I said in a jocular way that my vote or signature was as good as Sir John A. Macdonald's, but deny most emphatically having used the language attributed to me in reference to Mr. Woodworth. Had no idea McMillan was going to make an improper use of any remarks made by me. I am not in the habit of applying such offensive expressions towards any person."

That is from the gentleman who is said to have used those expressions; it is from the gentleman that this letter purported to be from, though it was not written by him at all. I have another letter from another gentleman, to whom I sent a copy of the *Hansard*, and asked for his opinion of it. He says:

"Your favor of the 25th ult. to hand, also copy of *Hansard* with reference to the petition from Meaford against the Franchise Bill. The most daring lying was practised by James McMillan and James Drummond in circulating this petition. What few Conservatives they got was through misrepresentation. They assured the people that all the wild Indians in Manitoba, the North-West Territory, British Columbia, and Keewatin would have the franchise."

He goes on to say that the two names mentioned on it as Conservatives are not Conservatives and never were, and that two or three Conservatives who are on the petition acknowledged this:

"The only persons I have found out that signed the petition were George Tomlinson Sewell and James Sparling, and I have spoken to them about it. They say it was the misrepresentation about the Indian vote in the North-West, and at the time every person was mad about outrages committed by the Indians at Frog Lake."

This is an explanation, I think, of many of the signatures that have been attached to this petition. As to this McMillan, the man who carried round that petition, he is a man who has always been in the habit of doing that sort of work, and is always ready to do it when he can get a fair day's wages, so long as he can make it tell against the Conservative party. He is a person who is entirely unscrupulous as to his representations, and I can well understand that he was fitted for that very important duty in the interests of his party.

Mr. SPEAKER. I am sorry that this letter, which was unfortunately read the other day, which I said was out of order, as it reflected upon a member of the House, should have gone into *Hansard*. I think that was the mistake that was made, and I think it lowers the position of this House to have letters of that kind read. I think it would be wise and well if hon. members would discontinue the practice of reading private letters.

ENQUIRIES FOR RETURNS.

Mr. BLAKE. I would ask when we may expect the returns to some addresses in connection with the Canadian

Mr. BOWELL.

Pacific Railway which I have called attention to on divers occasions. Most of them refer to information which is not in possession of the Government directly, but which they promised to obtain, and which the hon. gentleman no doubt has been pressing the Canadian Pacific Railway to give. Some of them, however, have been passed so long ago that I dare say he has forgotten all about them. For example, on the 5th February, there was an Order of the House for a statement as to the emigrants and immigrants by rail, a monthly statement which the hon. gentleman was in the habit of giving us before the Session was over, and we know that the Session is properly over a long while ago. Then, on the 9th February, an Address was passed for the gross and net earnings of the Canadian Pacific Railway for the years 1883-84, divided into three divisions.

Mr. POPE. The answer they gave the Government was that they did not keep their accounts in that way, and it was impossible to furnish the information in that way.

Mr. BLAKE. That is hardly a satisfactory answer to the House. If the Canadian Pacific Railway has placed the Government in a position to give that answer to the House by the shape of the document which we can ask for, then I should be prepared to take action on that document at the earliest convenient moment after it was received. But at the present moment we are in this position: an Address has been passed for that on the 9th February, as it has been passed in former years. Then there was an Address for the transactions between the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Government, in regard to town sites, on the 12th February; and on the same day there was an Order for various statements, three or four different sets of statements, by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company; and on the same day there was an Order for a statement with reference to land grant bonds, of which the hon. gentleman, some time ago, brought down that part relating to what the Government had done about land grant bonds; but the Address of the House called for information which was in the possession of the company about land grant bonds, and that was not answered. On the 17th of the same month there was an Order for various statements, and another Order for various statements on the 24th. There was an Address for the cost of construction of 1,650 miles west of Winnipeg, and on the 27th April an Address for the stockholders of the Ontario and Quebec Railway, which is said to be distantly connected with the Canadian Pacific Railway. Those are all that I have to direct the hon. gentleman's particular attention to, so far as the Canadian Pacific Railway is concerned. I have done so more than once heretofore, and I do so now because we may, I presume, as the Session is getting on a little, perhaps have a resolution about the Canadian Pacific Railway brought down to us in the course of a month or so, and this information would be important in that discussion. Then there are some other returns which I may suggest as important. There was an Address for papers connected with disallowances for the year. There was an Address, on the 6th February, for the High Commissioner's report. There was an Order of the House on the same day for the details of an estimate made by the Deputy Minister of Interior of \$58,000,000 as the proceeds of our estate in the North-West. On the 12th there was an Order for petitions and correspondence with the colonisation companies; and on the same day an Order of a like character for petitions and correspondence with the railway companies in the North-West, not including the Canadian Pacific.

Mr. POPE. What is that for?

Mr. BLAKE. The hon. gentleman knows that there are a number of persons formed into railway corporations in the East, who sometimes ask him for money, and then for more money, and it is that class of correspondence I mean,