

a law obliging the municipalities to pay their subscriptions for the construction of the Provincial Railway, on the decision of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, after a sworn report made by a competent engineer, and after a notice of 15 days, to give such municipalities an opportunity of being heard, are the ill-will of certain municipalities, shown by some in their neglect to comply with the requests of the treasurer, by others in their formal refusal to pay, and in certain cases by resolutions adopted asking new conditions respecting the agreements which they had made with the Government.

"The Government was of opinion that, without such legislation, the object of which is to avoid the delays of ordinary legal proceedings, the result of the ill-will of these municipalities would have been either to necessitate a new loan by the Province, and, consequently, to cause a burden to be unjustly imposed upon municipalities which had entered into no engagements, and which would derive no immediate benefit from the construction of the road, or the complete stoppage of the works already begun, together with the inevitable loss of interest on the enormous capital already laid out upon this enterprise, and the other damages resulting therefrom.

"The Government, while undertaking, in the first place, by the said law, to fulfil the conditions which it had agreed upon with the said municipalities, considered that, in substituting for the ordinary courts the Lieutenant-Governor, with an Executive Council responsible to the Legislature and to the people, it offered to the parties interested a tribunal which afforded as many guarantees as the ordinary courts.

"I would also take the liberty of calling your Excellency's attention to the fact that similar provisions are already in our statutes.

"I would cite to your Excellency chapter 83 of the Consolidated Statutes of Canada, and also chapter 47 of 36 Victoria of the statutes of Ontario.

"I humbly submit to your Excellency that a law devised for the better securing of the execution of a contract cannot have a retro-active effect. It enacts for the future and its objects are the respective interests of the parties.

"Now, I beg your Excellency to note, that while you were at Rivière Ouelle, I had the honour of requesting your authorisation to lay the question of finances before the House, and that you were kind enough to reply that you sent me a blank form by mail, and I considered this, at the time, as a great mark of confidence on your part. I did, in effect, receive a blank form with your signature, which I handed to the treasurer, who had it filled up by your aide-de-camp.

"Later on I had the honour of requesting your Excellency's authorisation generally to lay money questions before the House, and this your Excellency granted with your usual condescension. This permission, moreover, had invariably been accorded me by your predecessor, the late lamented Mr. Caron.

"I must admit that with this authorisation and the conviction in my mind that your Excellency had read the Treasurer's Budget speech, in which he announced the taxes which were afterwards proposed, I considered I had a right to inform my colleagues that I had your permission for all questions respecting money.

"I beg your Excellency to believe that I never had any intention of arrogating to myself the right of having measures passed without your approval, and that under existing circumstances, having had occasion to speak to your Excellency in reference to the law respecting the Provincial railway, and not having received any order to suspend it, I did not think your Excellency would discover in this measure any intention on my part to slight your prerogatives, which no one is more disposed than I am to respect and uphold.

"Your, &c. &c.

(Signed) "C. B. DE BOUCHERVILLE."

"After some conversation, the Lieutenant Governor having heard M. De Boucherville's explanations, admitted that, if there had been any misunderstanding, it was in good faith on the part of the latter in authorising his colleagues to say that they were authorised to submit the legislation in reference to money matters.

"He afterwards told him, in reply to his question on the subject, that the only difficulty remaining was the question of the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental Railway, and that he would give an answer on the following day, the 28th February.

"On the 28th February, at about half-past 7 in the evening, Mr. De Boucherville went to Spencerwood to convey to the Lieutenant-Governor the documents asked for in the letter of the 25th (which documents were prepared by the Honourable the Secretary and were accompanied by a synopsis). He asked him if he would soon give his answer. The Lieutenant-Governor told him he would examine the documents and probably give it to him on the following day, the 1st March.

"On leaving, Mr. De Boucherville said: 'If I understand you rightly, you are hesi-